Cruikshanks delin.

Barlow sculp.

The cloud-capt towers,
The gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples,
The great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherits,
Shall dissolve,
And, like a baseless fabric of a vi[sion]
Leave not a wreck behind.

Published by J. Roach, Woburn Street New Drury Theatre May 16, 1796.

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Roach's

New and Complete

HISTORY of the STAGE,

from its origin to its present state,

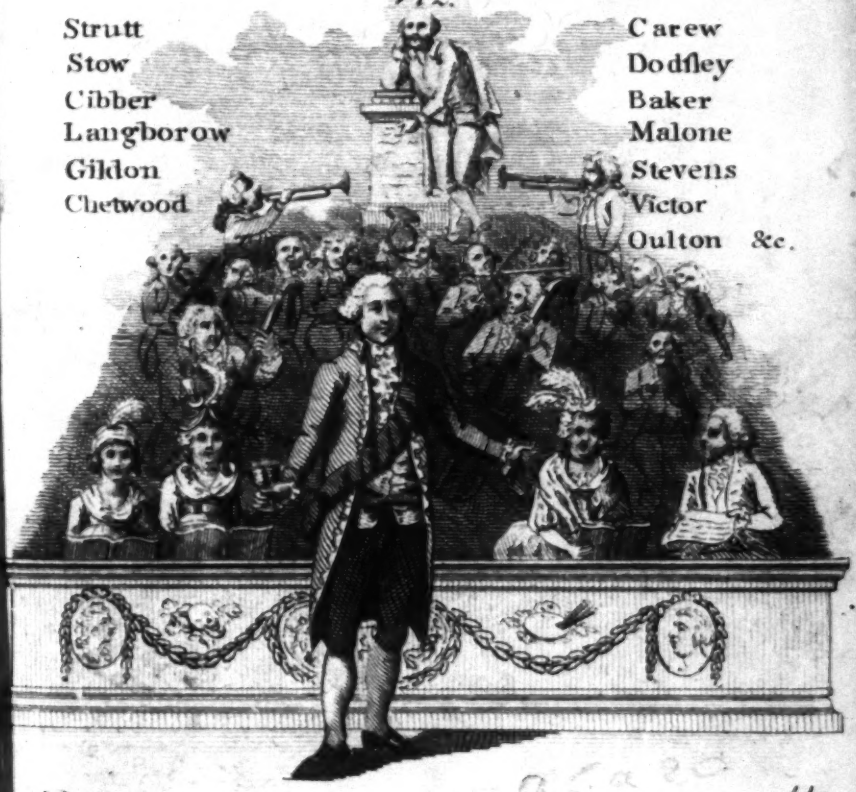
including,

All the entertaining Anecdotes, of London, Dublin, and Edinburgh. &c.

Recorded by our most Eminent Historians.

Viz.

Strutt
Stow
Cibber
Langborow
Gildon
Chetwood
Carew
Dodsley
Baker
Malone
Stevens
Victor
Oulton &c.



Intended as a companion to Roach's Authentic Memoirs of the Green Room.

LONDON

Printed for & by J. Roach, at the Britannia Printing Office. *Woburn Street, New Drury Theatre Royal. May 16. 1796.*

BRITISH MUSEUM

PREFACE.

THE avidity with which all theatrical publications are read, sufficiently evince the great estimation in which theatrical history is held. Several of our best authors have employed their pens, in handing down to posterity, the transactions of Managers and Performers; the former being looked upon as *kings*, the latter as *subjects*; and so many events take place during each *government*, so many *rebellions*, *wars*, *treaties*, &c. that to the generality of readers, the entertainment must be great: on account, however, of the voluminous size, to which Histories of the Stage are always extended, few indeed, though many are desirous, have an opportunity of becoming readers. It was therefore presumed, that a Pocket Volume at a moderate price, similar to ROACH's *Authentic Memoirs of the Green Room*, containing in a well con-

nected manner, all the entertaining anecdotes and remarks which have been offered to the Public by difierent authors, would be highly acceptable to the lovers of the drama; for this purpose the best authors have been consulted, and considerable pains taken to furnish theatrical readers with a new History of the Stage, including its *rise*, *progress*, and *present state* in *England*, *Ireland* and *Scotland*: the motives of this work being thus far explained it is now submitted to the Public to judge both of its merit and utility.

THE AUTHOR.

A
NEW AND COMPLETE
HISTORY OF THE STAGE.

CHAP. I.

Introductory remarks.

IT is a trite, but just observation, that the stage is, or ought to be a representation of human nature: in this the English stage is allowed, even by foreigners, to have the preference of all others. *Riccobōni* the Italian, and *Baron Pallnitz*, declared, that the English actors were much superior to either his countrymen or the French, who affect a forced stiff manner, while the English, who take nature for their guide, are happy in an easy justness, which forms the greatest perfection in acting; and, at the same time have the art of enlivening it in so agreeable a manner, as to prevent its appearing insipid. Notwithstanding the acknowledged inferiority of Italian caperers, the *large* Opera House in the Haymarket has been known to be quite full, while only a few were in the opposite *little* theatre, to witness the humour of poor PARSONS!

No diversions whatever blend so happily the *utile dulci* as theatrical, and the great encouragement all polite nations (particularly the Athenians

and Romans) gave them, is a sufficient answer to all the little cavils raised against them. It is true indeed, that the stage is made too often subservient to particular views, but neither on this account, nor that of mismanagement, should theatrical diversions be in general condemned.

One great help to the English actor, is, that all our best tragedies are in blank verse or smooth prose, whereas the French, Spanish or Germans, are generally in rhyme, which is as great a restraint on the actor as the poet; for it is impossible to express the passions justly, as make nature appear in a proper light, where heroes rant, lovers whine, and even messages or the most indifferent things are expressed in jingling words—luckily for the English stage, that custom is in a great manner exploded, and it is to be hoped will soon be entirely banished.

Notwithstanding we have in many instances the advantage of all modern theatres, yet there are several things inexcusably defective in our scenes and dresses—*powdered heads* and *silk stockings* for Roman and Grecian characters are ridiculed, as improprieties by Mr. Oulton in his continuation of Victor's History of the London theatres. Indeed the want of uniformity in habits, has rendered the *Dramatis Personæ*, as an assembly of different centuries. It is however acknowledged that the managers are continually improving. On account however of these absurdities, our tragedies are less perfect in representation than our comedies, and the inexhaustible fund of humour abounding in our stock plays, makes us excel all other theatres in that part

part of the drama. In other countries humour is more confined, nor does any nation produce so great a variety of original characters for our poets and actors to copy from, which is attributed partly to the nature of our climate, and partly to the genius of the people. It has been asserted, that there are more true originals to be met with in Shakespeare's, Jonson's, and Congreve's plays, than among all the dramatic writers of other nations. Our comedy, when compared with the French, Spanish, or Italian, may without suspicion of partiality, be allowed the preference. The extempore bombast of the Italian, and the well known absurdities of the Spanish, (where the clergy are the theatrical governors) can in no degree be compared with ours. The French stage, indeed, is the greatest rival, but even in Moliere the characters, though finely drawn, are fewer, and more confined than in Shakespeare, Congreve, or several others of our great dramatists. According to the characteristic of that nation, there is much levity in the French theatre, but more stability in the English.

Among the Athenians comedy was more a libel than satire, for Aristophanes, the most celebrated of the Greek comic writers, ridiculed Socrates, Alcibiades, and other great men, by introducing them on the stage by their own names. Ancient comedy, seems to have wanted several advantages, which we (and indeed all the moderns) have over them: though it must be acknowledged that we come far short of them in the moral part. Indeed the chief objection against English comedy is, that the rules of decency are not strictly adhered to.

Our ballad operas are unworthy notice, when taken in any other sense, than as a burlesque upon the Italians, which undoubtedly was Mr. Gay's design in his *Beggar's Opera*, the best sing-song composition in the English language. As to pantomimes, they are directly opposite to the intent of theatrical diversions, which should instruct, as well as entertain. In these fooleries, to the honour of the English actors, be it said, that the French and Italians far excel us, they have indeed a sort of necessity for those things, seeing, as before observed, their humour is more confined; but as our drama wants not variety, Mr. Harris, &c. would manifest greater judgment in banishing Harlequin from the stage, than expending such large sums on the *mummer*. Let them be seen only at *Sadler's Wells*, *Astley's*, &c. As these places of amusement are under such confined restrictions, it is an unpardonable encroachment in the patentees to rob them of their *dumb acting*. The very reason why pantomimes should be despised, is what recommends them to the ignorant—their impossibility and shocking extravagance; in the following lines of Pope's Dunciad, they are admirably ridiculed:

He look'd, and saw a sable sorc'rer rise,
Swift to whose hand a winged volume flies:
All sudden, gorgons hiss, and dragons glare,
And ten-horn'd fiends, and giants rush to war.
Hell rises, heav'n descends, and dance on earth,
Gods, imps, and monsters, music, rage and mirth,
A fire, a jigg, a battle, and a ball,
Till one wide conflagration swallows all, &c.

The

The generality of farces are indeed shocking stuff, fit only for a *Bartholomew Fair*, whence they took their rise; we have, however, a few exceptions, *Bon Ton*, *High Life below Stairs*, &c. &c. where broad humour and satire are happily blended: such are the after-pieces, which should always conclude a theatrical entertainment.

One act pieces, seem to have taken their rise from the dramatic proverbs of the French, consisting of some humorous scene, illustrative of a proverb; but we have not many of this kind—the late Mr. Colman seemed to be particularly fond of them, as they were without doubt, best calculated for a summer theatre.

We cannot call all our one act pieces dramatic proverbs; the majority are, more properly speaking farces, viz. *Lethe*, *Polly Honeycombe*, &c. as they contain as much fable, as the few scenes which compose it will admit. Preludes and Interludes seem very ancient—the former, however, are some temporary matter now—the latter frequently consist of dancing or singing, or both. Prologues and Epilogues are likewise very ancient, and custom has rendered them absolutely *necessary* now, though the former very seldom refer to the plays which they precede.

"No theatre in the world (says Mrs. Lennox) ever equalled England, in the multiplicity of subjects, and the various forms in which those subjects have been adapted to the stage. No people in the world, were ever so voraciously fond of theatrical entertainments—our appetite is without bounds, and our digestion is so very quick, that we can with equal eagerness and pleasure, swallow down the most

most ridiculous sing song farce, or the most absurd pantomime, immediately after we have been fed and feasted with the most exquisite delicacies of Shakspeare and Otway."

CHAP. II.

Origin of the Stage—their Scenes and Decorations —the Interludes, Masques, Mysteries, Moralities and Ludi.

IT is impossible to ascertain the date, when theatrical amusements were first introduced into England. They are mentioned very early in the Norman æra, by Stephonides or Fitz Stephen, a monk, who tells us "That the Interludes belonging to the theatre, were plays of holy subjects, representing the miracles wrought by the saints, with the acts and pious sufferings of the martyrs." And these holy and religious matters, continued for a long time, the only subjects of the drama. They also had plays, in which were represented the person and actions of our blessed Saviour, the Virgin Mary, Apostles, &c. &c.

As the above mentioned author, who lived in the reign of Henry the second, and died in the reign of Richard the first, (A. D. 1191,) writes of theatrical representations, as by no means uncommon in those days: we may therefore, naturally conclude, they were of a more ancient date. Fitz Stephen has left no account, *where* or *how* these religious plays were performed, or whether there were any players at that time, who, according to the present age, made acting a profession.

In

In the sixth year of Edward the Third's reign, it was ordained by parliament that a company of men, called *vagrants*, who made masquerades through the whole city, should be whipped out of London, because they represented scandalous things, in little alehouses and other places, where the populace assembled. Dodsley imagines these to be of that species called *mummers*, a word, signifying one who masqued or disguised himself to play the fool. These *mummers* used to stroll about the country, dressed in an antic manner, dancing, mimicking, and shewing postures, (whence comes the stage phrase *mummery*). Being disguised, they also frequently committed violent outrages, and were guilty of many lewd disorders, which afterwards so much encreased, that in the third year of Henry the eighth, an act was made against *mummers*, in which the penalty for selling vizors, or keeping them in any house, was twenty shillings each vizor. It is however agreed by antiquaries, that these *mummers* were the true original comedians of England, and their excellence altogether consisted, (as that of their successors doth in part still) in mimickry and humour. *Mummings* were likewise the common holyday amusements among the young people. Stow informs us, that the citizens of London, at the feast of Christmas in 1377, made a *mumming* to divert the young Prince Richard, son to Edward the Black Prince, afterwards Richard the second. We read of another *mumming*, in the second year of Henry the fourth's reign, when he was keeping his Christmas at Eltham.

The

The *Personæ* (or masques) which they us'd, must have been a dreadful inconvenience to the actors, for as they cover'd the face, they must certainly have been put to an uncommon trouble to make themselves expressive enough without such assistance, and the spectators depriv'd of the greatest beauties in acting, which are undoubtedly conveyed by the features, especially the eyes, which our poets very justly call, the *tell-tales of the soul.*

In the early dawn of literature, when the sacred mysteries were the only theatrical performances, what is now called the stage, did then consist of three several platforms, or stages raised one above another: on the upper, sat the *pater cœlestis*, surrounded with his angels: on the second appeared the holy saints and glorified men, and the last and lowest was occupied by mere men, who had not yet passed from this transitory life to the regions of eternity. On one side of this lowest platform was the resemblance of a dark pitchy cavern, from whence issued appearance of fire and flames, and when it was necessary, the audience were treated with hideous yellings, &c. imitative of the howlings and cries of the wretched souls tormented by the relentless demons. From this yawning cave the devils themselves constantly ascended, to delight and instruct the spectators—to *delight*, because they were usually the greatest jesters and buffoons that then appeared, and to *instruct*, for that they treated the wretched mortals, who were delivered to them, with the utmost cruelty, warning thereby all men carefully to avoid the falling into the clutches of such hardened and remorseless spirits. But in the more

more improved state of the theatre, when regular plays were introduced, all this mummery was abolished, and the whole cavern and devils, together with the highest platform before mentioned, entirely taken away, two platforms only then remaining; and these continued a considerable time in use, the upper stage serving them for chambers, or any elevated situations (as when some of the actors, should, from the walls of the cities, or the like, discourse with those who were standing under them on the lower platform). This appears from several entries, to be found in the old editions of the first plays, where mention is often made of the *upper* and *lower* stages.

Before the Restoration, the stage decorations and ornaments were very few, and even those extremely plain and homely. We are told, that they had no other scenes and decorations, than old *tapestry*, and the stage strewed with rushes, with habits accordingly. There were four several curtains in the front, instead of a scene: each curtain was divided by a column, and the spaces served the actors for their exits and their entrances, the curtains being drawn aside to let them pass. As there were names on the top, no doubt the partitions were intended to represent the doors or portals of the houses, of such characters or their families, as by the nature of the play, should have separate houses, and as the name of each person was written over his respective mansion, we may naturally conclude, (except the business of the play required it otherwise), that here was his entrance and exit. These tapestry ornaments were hung over

over the sides, which were composed of the walls of the theatre, there were no passages at the sides of the stage, nor were any necessary till the introduction of the flat front scene, and then O. P. and P. S. took place. By degrees, as the players were more encouraged, the theatre was more ornamented, and the scenes with the decorations, dresses, &c. augmented. The actors themselves, even after the abolishing of the mysteries, made but slow improvement. Stow informs us, that the comedians of former times were very poor and ignorant: on their mending, they were taken into the service of the nobility, and out of these companies twelve were chosen, who, at the request of Sir Francis Walsingham were sworn the Queen's servants, and were allowed wages and liveries. Among these twelve players, two are recorded as very clever, viz. Thomas Wilson and Richard Tarleton, for their pleasant and refined wit.

The chief reason, why there were so few stage ornaments, and those few so very plain, was the low prices of admission into the theatre—mention is made of a *twopenny gallery*. It was common for the audience to drink wine or beer during the play, and even to smoke:—this fashion continued till the latter end of the reign of Charles the first. All female characters were formerly acted by men, no women ever appearing publicly upon the stage before the Restoration.

When the mysteries were the only stage performances, they were often, and indeed usually performed in the churches, and on the sabbath-day, and this fashion it is thought, continued, even when

profane

profane stories had taken place of the religious ones. The playing in churches was restrained by a proclamation in the reign of Henry the eighth, but the acting plays on sundays continued till the reign of Charles the first. The usual time of acting was early in the afternoon. In the reign of Charles the first, they generally began at three o'clock, so that the whole of the play was probably performed by daylight, but it was not so anciently, as may be seen from the following couplet to one of the old mysteries.—

" *Monday next, if that we may,*
" *By six of the bell, we'll 'gin our play.*"

Carew in his Survey of Cornwall, informs us, that the Greary Miracle (which signifies a miracle play) was a kind of interlude, compiled in Cornish, out of some scripture history. For the representation an amphitheatre was raised in an open field, having the diameter of its enclosed plain some forty or fifty feet; the country people from all sides many miles off, came to see these entertainments, and were highly delighted with the devils and other devices. This author does not ascertain the time, when these greary miracles were originally exhibited, but tells us, that the earliest date, in which express mention is made of these representations, was in 1378, when the scholars of Paul's school, presented a petition to Richard the second, praying his majesty, " to prohibit some unexpert people from presenting the History of the Old Testament, to the great prejudice of the said clergy, who have been at great expence, in order to represent it publicly at Christmas." The same author informs

us, that in 1390, the parish clerks of London, played interludes at Skinner's Wells, July the 18th, 19th, and 20th. Also, that in 1409, in the tenth year of Henry the fourth's reign, they acted at Clerkenwell, for eight days successively, a play concerning the *Creation of the World*, at which most of the nobility and gentry in the kingdom were present. Hence we see, that the entertainments of the *Mysteries* were at a very early period, though we cannot exactly determine how long they continued to be exhibited. However, these religious stories, according to Dodsley, were represented in so stupid and ridiculous a manner, that afterwards, they were thought, especially those taken from the New Testament, to encourage infidelity and libertinism: they scrupled not in these mysteries, to personate the most sacred characters, even the great DEITY HIMSELF, in a performance called *God's Promises*: notwithstanding, they were of old times so famous, that they seem to have furnished in latter times, the ground work for another very noted stage performance—a *Puppet-show*, as appears from the following bill, printed in the reign of Queen Anne, which for its motley mixture, is certainly a curiosity.

"*By her Majesty's Permission.*"

"At Heatly's booth, over against the Cross Daggers, next to Mr. Miller's booth, during the time of Bartholomew Fair, will be presented a little opera, called, *The Old Creation of the World new revived*, with the addition of the glorious battle, obtained over the French and Spaniards, by his Grace the Duke of Marlborough.

The

The Contents are these.

1. The creation of Adam and Eve.
2. The intrigues of Lucifer in the garden of Eden.
3. Adam and Eve driven out of Paradise.
4. Cain going to plow—Abel driving sheep.
6. Abraham offereth up his son Isaac.
7. Three wise men of the East, guided by a star, come and worship Christ.
8. Joseph and Mary fly away at night, upon an ass.
9. King Herod's cruelty: his *mens* spears *laden* with *children*.
10. Rich *Dives* invites his *friends*, and orders his *porter* to keep the beggars from his gate.
11. Poor *Lazarus* comes a begging at rich *Dives* gate, the dogs lick his sores.
12. The good Angel and Death, contend for *Lazarus*'s life.
13. Rich *Dives* is taken sick and dieth—he is buried in great solemnity.
14. Rich *Dives* in hell, and *Lazarus* in *Abraham*'s bosom, seen in a most glorious object, all in machines ascending in a throne, guarded with multitudes of angels, with the breaking of the clouds, discovering the palace of the sun, in double and treble prospects, to the admiration of all the spectators; likewise, several rich and large figures, which *dances* jiggs, sarabands, antics and country dances between every act, completed with the merry humours of *Sir John Spendall* and *Punchinello*, with several other things, never yet exposed. Performed by Mat. Heatly.

VIVAT REGINA."

The Mysteries were succeeded by the Moralities, in which the ideas though jumbled, had some shadow of meaning. The former only represented in a senseless manner, a miraculous story, either from the Old or New Testament, but the Moralities, contained something of design, a fable, and a moral; with an attempt at poetry—the virtues, vices, and other affections of the mind were also personified, as appears from the following *Dramatis Personæ* of an old Morality, called *All for Money*.

THEOLOGY. SCIENCE.
ART. MONEY.
ADULATION.
GODLY ADMONITION.
MISCHIEVOUS HELP.
PLEASURE.
REST FOR PLEASURE.
SIN. SWIFT TO SIN.
VIRTUE. HUMILITY.
CHARITY.
ALL FOR MONEY.
DAMNATION.
SATAN. PRIDE.
GLUTTONY.
LEARNING WITH MONEY.
LEARNING WITHOUT MONEY.
MONEY WITHOUT LEARNING.
NEITHER LEARNING NOR MONEY.
MONEYLESS.
MONEYLESS AND FRIENDLESS.
NYCHOLL.
GREGORY GRACELESS.
MOTHER CROOK.
JUDAS. DIVES.
WILLIAM WITH TWO WIVES, &c. In

In our present comedies we also find characteristical names, viz. *Tattle*, *Foresight*, *Scandal*, *Backbite*, *&c.*

Exclusive of the Mummings, Masques, and Mysteries, there was a species of entertainment, called the *Ludi*, which were performed for the diversion of the king and his nobles at court. Mr. Warton in his History of English Poetry, tells us, that in the wardrobe rolls of Edward the third, in the year 1348, there is an account of the dresses, for furnishing the plays or sports of the king, held in the Castle of Guildford, at the feast of Christmas. In these *Ludi* were expended, 80 tunics of buckram of various colours, 42 vizors of various similitudes, i. e. 14 of the faces of women—ditto, of the faces of men with beards—ditto, of heads of angels, made with silver, 28 crests, 14 mantles embroidered with heads of dragons—ditto, of white tunics, wrought with heads and wings of peacocks—ditto, with heads of swans with wings—ditto, of tunics, painted with eyes of peacocks—ditto, of tunics of English linen painted; and as many tunics embroidered with stars of gold and silver.

A similar sport is mentioned in the wardrobe of Richard the second, in 1391.

The same author, also, gives a memoir of shews and ceremonies exhibited at Christmas, in the reign of Henry the seventh, in 1489: at which time there were no disguisings, (i. e. masques), and few plays; but there was an abbot of Misrule, highly extolled as a comedian. We also read, that at night, the king, queen, and king's mother, came into the White Hall, where there was a play. This

play, together with the *Ludi*, were nothing more than dialogues, and short moral interludes, performed by the masquers and disguised courtiers, but which seemed not to bear any resemblance to the old Mysteries, the Moralities and other pieces which were on a far more extensive plan. These dialogues were the fashionable diversions then at court, during the reign of Henry the eighth.

This kind of dialogues, interludes, or masques, continued even after the introduction of regular plays, and were generally composed by the chief poets, and played by the courtiers themselves, of which sort, Jonson, in particular, wrote several, as well for the diversion of the king and queen, as for the entertainment of the nobility at their marriages, or some particular occasion.

CHAP. III.

Progress of the Drama—of the first Writers—Specimen of the Style—Performances interrupted for their obscenity—Anecdotes of Alleyn the celebrated Comedian, and George Peele the Poet.

HAYWOOD is one of the first dramatic writers, that our island produced: he was born at North Mimms, near St. Albans in Hertfordshire, and received the first rudiments of his education at Oxford. His ready wit, and aptness for jest and repartee, rendered him a favorite with Henry the eighth, who frequently rewarded him.

Though

Though according to Dodsley, the muse was now just awake, yet she was not perfectly roused from her slumber,—tragedy and comedy were mere bluster and quibble: yet they seem to have a disposition to do better, though they had not the method—for some of their pieces were adorned with dumb shews, some with chorusses, and some they introduced and explained by an interlocution. *Gammer Gurton's needle*, is with great appearance of truth, reckoned our first comedy; it appeared soon after the interludes, being altogether of a comic cast, possessing humour, though of a low and comic kind. Henry Parker, son of Sir William Parker, is said to have written several tragedies and comedies, in the reign of Henry the Eighth: also, one John Stokes in 1535, wrote a comedy called *Piscator*, or *The Fisher caught*. Mr. Richard Edwards, who was born 1523, (and in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign was made one of the gentlemen of her majesty's chapel, and master of the children there) being both an excellent musician, and a good poet, wrote two comedies, one called *Palæmon and Arcite*, in which a cry of hounds in hunting was so well imitated, that the queen and audience were extremely delighted: the other called *Damon and Pithias, the two faithfullest friends in the world*. After him came Thomas Sackville, lord Buckhurst, and Thomas Norton, the writers of *Gorboduc*, the first dramatic piece of any consideration in the English language. Of these and some others, hear the judgment of Puttenham, in his Art of Poetry, written in the reign of Queen Elizabeth: "I think, says he, that

that for tragedy, the lord of Buckhurst, and Maister Edward Perrys, for such doings as I have seen of theirs, do deserve the highest price: the earl of Oxford, and Maister Edwards of her majesty chapel, for comedy and interlude." After these followed John Lillie, famous in his time for wit, and having greatly improved the English language, in a romance which he wrote, entitled, *Eupheus and his England*, or *The Anatomy of Wit*; of which it is said by the publisher of his plays, "Our nation are in his debt for a new English which he taught them, *Eupheus and his England* began first that language. All our ladies were then his scholars, and that beauty in court who could not *parle* Euphuism, was as little regarded, as she which now there speaks not French." This extraordinary romance, so famous for its wit, so fashionable in the court of Queen Elizabeth, and which is said to have introduced so remarkable a change in our language, is an unnatural affected jargon, in which the perpetual use of metaphors, allusions, allegories, and analogies, is to pass for wit; and stiff bombast for language.

Notwithstanding all these imperfections, the English theatre was far superior to the French, and equal to the other nations of Europe, the Italians excepted, who by early translations of the old dramatic writers had arrived to greater perfection.

The creative genius of Shakspeare, Fletcher and Jonson, now gave birth and perfection to the stage; to the former of whom, the dramatic muses are entirely indebted for their beauties.

The first company of players we have any account of, is from a patent granted in 1574, to James

James Burbage and others, servants to the Earl of Leicester. In 1578, the children of St. Paul's were performers of dramatic entertainments. About 1580, the parish clerks of London are said, to have acted the mysteries at Skinner's Well. It is believed the next company regularly established, was the children of the Royal chapel, in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign; the direction of which was given to Mr. Richard Edwards. Some few years afterwards a company was formed, under the denomination of the children of the Revels. The children of the Chapel and the Revels, became very famous, and all Lillies plays, and several of Jonson's were first acted by them. Indeed these children arrived to such eminence at last, that the very men actors became jealous, and some of the most approved players among the *grown-up* were educated among them.

Many plays were written by masters of schools, to be performed by youths: among which are the curious performances of Thomas Goff of Christ-church, Oxford; who was in his day esteemed an excellent poet. In order to give our readers a specimen of the style, as well as of the ingenuity of this author, we shall give a speech out of *Amureth*; or *The Courageous Turk*, who coming upon the stage, and seeing "an appearance of the heavens being on fire, comets and blazing stars," thus makes his address to the upper regions:

"*How now (ye heavens) grow you*
"*So proud, that you must needs put on curled*
"*locks,*
"*And clothe yourselves in perriwigs of fire?*"

Surely

Surely our readers will allow the thought of the heavens clothing themselves with *perriwigs of fire*, to be uncommonly great; but how great must their surprise be, when assured that every speech in the play is equally sublime and excellent. In one of them, entitled *The Raging Turk;* or *Bajazet the Second*: the hero Bajazet is introduced with th following speech—

" Am I not an emperor?—He that breahes a *no*,
" Damns in that negative syllable his soul;
" Durst any god gainsay it, he should feel
" The strength of fiercest giants in my arms:
" Mine anger's at the highest, and I could shake
" The firm foundation of the earthly globe;
" Could I but grasp the poles in these two hands,
" I'd pluck the world asunder."

And this character of a GREAT HERO is completed by his declaring, that he will scale Heaven, and would when he had

———" Got beyond the utmost sphere,
" Besiege the concave of the universe,
" And hunger-starve the gods, till they confessed
" What furies did oppress *his* sleeping soul.

These plays were so highly esteemed, that they went through two editions, the last being printed in 1656.

At this period, not only in comedies, but in the deepest tragedies, a fool was thought absolutely necessary, who with his buffoonery, might divert the audience, and give a *charming variety* to the piece. Shakspeare we find, complied with this taste.

From

From the year 1570, to the year 1629, when the playhouse in White Friars was finished, there were no less than seventeen playhouses. The companies of players were equally numerous. In 1574 it was enacted, that a penalty of five pounds, and fourteen days confinment, should attend the representation of any obscene play, openly acted within the liberty of the city. Likewise, that no play should be acted till first perused, with many other restrictions. Plays however, in private houses, &c. were exempt from this act. At length they increased so much in obscenity, as to be totally suppressed, but they were again tolerated under fresh restrictions, upon application to the Queen and Council. Notwithstanding the performances were so very abusive and satirical, as to create many disturbances. The zeal of the pulpit, and the gravity of the city equally concurred to condemn them. Advocates, however, stood up in their defence, and several pamphlets were published on both sides. At this period the drama was in an humble state; but it soon acquired credit, by the enterprizing genius of A SHAKSPEARE; whose early productions stamped his fame, and procured him Queen Elizabeth's esteem.

Edward Alleyn was a celebrated English player in the sisteenth century; he was born in London, in the parish of St. Botolph, September 1, 1566, as appears from a memorandum of his own writing. Dr. Fuller says, that he was bred a stage-player; and that his father would have given him a liberal education, but that he was averse to a serious course of life. He was, however, a youth of an excellent

lent capacity, a chearful temper, a tenacious memory, a sweet elocution, and in his person of a stately port and aspect; all which advantages might well induce a young man to take the theatrical profession. By several authorities we find he must have been on the stage some time before 1592; for at this time he was in high favour with the town, and greatly applauded by the best judges, particularly by Ben Jonson.

It may appear surprising, how one of Mr. Alleyn's profession should be enabled to erect such an edifice as Dulwich college in Surry, and liberally endow it for the maintenance of so many persons. But it must be observed, that he had some paternal fortune, which, though small, might lay a foundation for his future affluence; and it is to be presumed that the profits he received from acting, to one of his provident and managing disposition, and one who by his excellence in playing drew after him such crowds of spectators, must have considerably improved his fortune; besides, he was not only an actor, but master of a playhouse, built at his own expence, by which he is said to have amassed considerable wealth. He was also keeper of the king's wild beasts, or master of the royal bear garden, which was frequented by vast crowds of spectators; and the profits arising from these sports are said to have amounted to five hundred pounds per annum. He was thrice married; and the portions of his two first wives, they leaving him no issue to inherit, might probably contribute to this benefaction. Such kind of donations have been frequently thought to proceed more from vanity and ostentation than real piety; but this of Mr. Alleyn has been ascribed

cribed to a very singular cause, for the devil has been said to be the first promoter of it. Mr. Aubrey mentions a tradition, "that Mr. Alleyn playing a demon with six others, in one of Shakspeare's plays, was, in the midst of the play, surprised by an apparition of the devil; which so worked on his fancy, that he made a vow, which he performed by building Dulwich College." He began the foundation of this college under the direction of Inigo Jones, in 1614; and the buildings, gardens, &c. were finished in 1617, in which he is said to have expended about 10,000l. After the college was built, he met with some difficulty in obtaining a charter for settling his lands in mortmain; for he proposed to endow it with 800l. per annum, for the maintenauce of one master, one warden, and four fellows, three whereof were to be clergymen, and the fourth a skilful organist; also six poor men, and as many women, besides twelve poor boys, to be educated till the age of fourteen or sixteen; and then put out to some trade or calling. The obstructions he met with, arose from the Lord Chancellor Bacon, who wished King James to settle part of those lands for the support of two academical lectures; and he wrote a letter to the Marquis of Buckingham, dated August 18, 1618, entreating him to use his interest with his Majesty for that purpose. Mr. Alleyn's solicitation was however at last complied with, and he obtained the royal license, giving him full power to lay his foundation, by his Majesty's letters patent, bearing date the 21st of June, 1619; by virtue whereof he did, in the chapel of the said new hospital at Dulwich, called "The College of

God's Gift," on the 13th of September following, publicly read and published a quadripartite writing in parchment, whereby he created and established the said college; he then subscribed it with his name, and fixed his seal to several parts thereof, in presence of several honorable persons, and ordered copies of the writings to four different parishes. He was himself the first master of his college, so that to make use of the words of Mr. Haywood, one of his cotemporaries. "He was so mingled with humility and charity, that he became his own pensioner, humbly submitting himself to that proportion of diet and cloaths which he had bestowed on others." We have no reason to think he ever repented of this distribution of his substance, but on the contrary, that he was entirely satisfied, as appears from the following memorial in his own writing, found amongst his papers: "May 26, 1620, my wife and I acknowledge the fine at the common pleas bar, of all our lands to the college: blessed be God that he has given us life to do it." His wife died in the year 1623, and about two years afterwards he married Constance Kinchtoe, who survived him. and received remarkable proofs of his affection, if at least we may judge of it by his will, wherein he left her considerably. He died November 25, 1626, in the 61st year of his age, and was buried in the chapel of his new college.

About this time there also lived on the Bank-side, over against Black-Friars, one George Peele, City Poet, and Conductor of the Pageants. He left a wife and daughter behind at his death in the year 1598.

He

He was famous for his tricks and merry pranks; and as there are books of other facetious fellows in print, so are there of his: particularly one, entitled "Merrie conceited Jests of George Peele, gentleman, sometime student in Oxford. (he was Master of Arts there) wherein is shewed the course of his life, how he lived. A man very well known in the city of London and elsewhere. London: printed for Hen. Bell, *4to.* 1627." Pages 21. *Black Letter.* They are not, however, properly jests, but the tales or tricks of a sharper.

Nash, in his epistle to the gentlemen students of both universities, prefixed to Greene's Arcadia, *4to. Black Letter*, recommends his friend Peele, "as the chief supporter of pleasance now living; the Atlas of poetry, and *primus verborum artifex*: whose first increase, The Arraignment of Paris, might plead to their opinions, his pregnant dexteritie of wit, and manifold varietie of invention." He wrote several plays: among the rest "The sinking of Queen Elinor at Charing-Cross, and rising at Potter's Hithe, now named Queen Hithe."

In the following passages from his play, entitled David and Bethsabe, founded on Scriptural History, the reader of true taste will find a considerable portion of that *vis poetica*, without which the most harmonious verses only "play round the ear," without ever reaching the heart.

Bethsabe bathing over a Spring, while *David* sits above viewing her, thus addresses herself to *Zephyr*.

Come gentle zephyr, trick'd with those perfumes
That erst in Eden sweeten'd Adam's love,

And stroke my bosom with my silken fan;
This shade, sun-proof, is yet no proof for thee.
Thy body, smoother than this waveless spring,
And purer than the substance of the same,
Can creep thro' that his lances cannot pierce:
Thou, and thy sister, soft and sacred Air,
Goddess of life, and governess of health,
Keeps ev'ry fountain fresh, and arbour sweet;
No brazen gate her passage can repulse,
Nor bushy thicket bar thy subtle breath:
Then deck thee wings, bring delicate perfumes,
To play the wantons with us thro' the leaves.

If any prudish readers are offended by the last line of the above speech, let them expunge it; but if they do not at the same time admire the poetical expression in the foregoing ones, "the motions of their spirits" must be dull as night, "if their affections are not "dark as Erebus."

David's soliloquy, in consequence of his feelings on the sight of Bethsabe, in so animating a situation, is luxuriantly poetical, and perfectly characteristic.

What tunes, what words, what looks, what wonders pierce
My soul, incensed with a sudden fire?
What tree, what shade, what spring, what paradise,
Enjoys the beauty of so fair a dame?
Fair Eva, plac'd in perfect happiness,
Lending her praise-notes to the liberal heavens,
Struck with the accents of arch-angels tunes,
Wrought not more pleasure to her husband's thoughts
Than this fair woman's words and notes to mine.
May that sweet plain that bears her pleasant weight,

Be

Be still enamour'd with discolour'd flow'rs;
That precious fount bear sand of purest gold,
And for the pebble, let the silver streams
That pierce earth's bowels to maintain the source,
Play upon rubies, sapphires, chrysolites;
The brims let be embraced with golden curls,
Of moss that sleeps with sound the waters make,
For joy to feed the fount with their recourse!
Let all the grass that beautifies her bower,
Bear manna ev'ry morn instead of dew,
Or let the dew be sweeter far than that
That hangs like chains of pearl, on Hermon's hill,
Or balm which trickled from old Aaron's beard.

The following lines are written in the same animated strain.

See Cusay*, see, the flower of Israel,
The fairest daughter that obeys the king,
In all the land the Lord subdued to me;
Fairer than Israel's lover at the well,
Brighter than inside bark of new hewn cedar,
Sweeter than flames of fine perfumed myrrh,
And comelier than the silver clouds that dance
On zephyr's wings before the king of heaven.
Bright Bethsabe gives earth to my desires,
Verdure to earth, and to that verdure flowers;
To flowers sweet odours, and to odours wings,
That carry pleasures to the hearts of kings.

The play upon words in the above lines may not be agreeable to many critical ears; but there is something in the flow of them, which will sure-

* *One of David's friends.*

ly give pleasure to all those who can receive it, from smooth and melodious versification.

The language which our author has put into the mouth of Jonadab, the friend of Amnon, in consequence of his having had an incestuous commerce with his sister Thamar, is evidently written by the hand of a master.

Fair Thamar, now dishonour hunts thy foot,
And follows thee thro' ev'ry covert shade,
Discovering thy shame and nakedness,
Even from the valleys of Jehosophat,
Up to the lofty mounts of Lebanon;
Where cedars, stirr'd with anger of the winds,
Sounding in storms the tale of thy disgrace;
Tremble with fury, and with murmur shake
Earth with their feet, and with their heads th' heav'ns;
Beating the clouds into their swiftest rack,
To bear this wonder round about thy world.

With equal energy of expression, Absalom execrates his brother Amnon's libidinious proceedings.

This fact hath Jacob's ruler seen from heaven,
And thro' a cloud of smoke, and tower of fire,
(As he rides vaunting him upon the greens)
Shall tear his chariot wheels with violent winds,
And throw his body in the bloody sea;
At him the thunder shall discharge his bolt;
And his fair spouse, with bright and fiery wings*,
Sits ever burning on his hateful bones.

The

* *An ingenious writer speaking of this play, very justly observed, that it abounds in luxuriant descriptions*

The following reflections by the Chorus, occasioned by David's conduct on the presumption of man, are at once nobly conceived and happily expressed.

O! proud revolt of a presumptuous man,
Laying his bridle on the neck of sin,
Ready to bear him past his grave to hell,
Like as the fatal raven, that in his voice
Carries the dreadful summons of our deaths,
Flies by the fair Arabian spiceries.
Her pleasant gardens, and delightsome parks,
Seeming to curse them with his hoarse exclaims,
And yet doth stoop with hungry violence,
Upon a piece of hateful carrion;
So wretched man, displeas'd with those delights,
Would yield a quick'ning favour to his soul,
Pursues with eager and unstaunched thirst,
The greedy longings of his loathsome flesh.
If holy David so shook hands with sin,
What shall our baser spirits glory in?

The following description of David by Joab, must be admired as soon as it is read.

Beauteous and bright is he among the tribes;
As when the sun attir'd in glist'ring robe.

Comes

---

descriptions and fine imagery—"His genius (says Mr. Hawkins) seems to have been kindled by reading the prophets and the song of Solomon. He calls lightning, by a metaphor worthy of Æschylus the spouse of thunder, with bright and fiery wings. There are other passages in this play, of which Milton would not have been ashamed.

Comes dancing from his oriental gate,
And bridegroom like, hurls thro' the gloomy air
His radiant beams; such doth king David show,
Crown'd with the honours of his enemies town,
Shining in riches like the firmament,
The starry vault that over-hangs the earth,
So looketh David king of Israel.

Bethsabe's address to David, in order to administer relief to him in his afflicted state, is equally deserving of admiration.

What means my Lord, the lamp of Israel,
From whose bright eyes, all eyes receive their light;
To dim the glory of his sweet aspects,
And paint his countenance with his heart's distress?
Take but your lute, and make the mountains dance
Retrieve the sun's sphere, and restrain the clouds,
Give ears to trees, make savage lions tame,
Impose still silence to the loudest winds,
And fill the fairest day with foulest storms;
Then why should passions of much meaner power,
Bear head against the heart of Israel.

The subsequent scene between David and Solomon, places the ardent thirst after knowledge in the latter, in so striking a light, that the sentimental as well as poetical beauties in it, will, 'tis imagined, sufficiently apologize for its length.

David. Tell me my Solomon wilt thou embrace
Thy father's precepts graved on thy heart,
And satisfy my zeal of thy renown,
With practice of such sacred principles,
As shall concern the state of Israel?

Solomon.

Solomon. My royal father, if the heav'nly zeal,
Which for my welfare feeds upon your soul,
Were not sustained with virtue of mine own,
In the sweet accents of your chearful voice,
Should not each hour beat upon mine ears,
As sweetly as the breath of heaven to him
That gaspeth scorched with the summer's sun:
I should be guilty of unpardoned sin,
Fearing the plague of heav'n, and shame of earth;
But since I vow myself to learn the skill,
And holy secrets of his mighty hand,
Whose cunning tunes the music of my soul,
It would content me, father; first to learn,
How the Eternal fram'd the firmament;
Which bodies had their influence by fire,
And which are fill'd with hoary winter's use:
What sign is rainy; and what star is fair;
Why by the rules of true proportion,
The year is still divided into months,
The months to days, the days to certain hours;
What fruitful race shall fill the future world;
Or what time shall this round building stand:
What magistrates, what kings shall keep in awe
Men's minds with bridles of th' eternal law.

David. Wade not too far, my boy, in waves too deep
The feeble eyes of our aspiring thoughts
Behold things present, and record things past;
But things to come exceed our human reach,
And are not painted yet in Angel's eyes;
For these, submit thy sense, and say "Thou pow'r,
That now art framing of the future world,
Know'st all to come, not by the course of heaven,
By frail conjectures of inferior signs,

By

By monstrous floods, by flights and flocks of birds,
By bowels of a sacrificed beast,
Or by the figures of some hidden art;
But by a true and natural presage,
Laying the ground and perfect architect
Of all our actions now before thine eyes,
From Adam to the end of Adam's seed.
O heav'n, protect my weakness with thy strength;
So look on me that I may view thy face,
And see these secrets written in thy brows.
O Sun, come dart thy rays upon my morn,
That now mine eyes eclipsed to the earth,
May brightly be refin'd, and shine to heav'n:
Transform me to this flesh, that I may live
Before my death, regenerate in thee.
O thou great God, ravish my earthly spirit,
That for the time a more than human skill
May feed the organons of all my sense:
That when I speak, thy thoughts may be my guide,
And when I speak, I may be made by choice
The perfect echo of thy heav'nly voice."
Thus say, my son, and thou shalt learn them all.

Solomon. A secret fury ravisheth my soul,
Lifting my mind above her former bounds;
And, as the eagle, roused from her stand
With violent hunger tow'ring in the air,
Seizeth her feather'd prey, and thinks to feed,
But seeing then a cloud beneath her feet,
Lets fall the fowl, and is emboldened
With eyes intentive to bedare the Sun,
And flyeth close unto his stately sphere:
So *Solomon* mounted on the burning wings
Of zeal divine, lets fall his mortal food,

And

And cheers his senses with celestial air,
Treads in the golden, starry labyrinth,
And holds his eyes fix'd on *Jehova's* brows.

The poetical reader, whose ears are delighted with the harmony of numbers, will find, in many of the above cited passages, that melody of versification, which is so much admired in the tragedies of Rowe: he will also find in some of them, a strength of expression not often to be met with in the "chiming lays" of that mellifluous poet. In a critical review, however, of David and Bethsabe, we are frequently obliged to exclaim—"*Si sic omnia scripsisset*:—for it must be owned, that though there are striking beauties in this singular play, there are also glaring defects: defects which can only be pardoned in such a genius as Shakspeare.

CHAP. IV.

From Shakspeare's management to Rich's

IN 1603, the first year of King James's reign, a licence was granted under the privy-seal to Shakspeare, Fletcher, Burbage, Hemmings, Condell and others, authorising them to act plays, not only at their usual house, the Globe on the Bankside, but in any other part of the kingdom, during his Majesty's pleasure. At this time there were eminent players, of whom there are but imperfect accounts—the number of authors increased, and the passion for shew and representation became so great, that

that the weddings, birthdays, &c. of the nobility were usually celebrated with masques or interludes, at a great expence. This universal eagerness for theatrical diversions, was in 1647 suppressed, puritanism having triumphed over the playhouses, as well as the constitution. All stage players were now declared to be rogues, and liable to be punished as such. On the execution of Charles the first, the surviving dependants upon the drama, returned to the exercise of their former profession. They ventured to act plays in 1648 at the Cockpit; but were soon interrupted and silenced: they ventured however, to represent a few plays privately, at a little distance from town; at last they were permitted to entertain some of the nobility at their country houses, by whom they were rewarded. They also obtained leave at particular festivals to divert the public at the Red Bull, but not always without interruption; in this miserable plight were the Thespian heroes of these times: and though there were little hopes of the stage ever again reviving, Sir William Davenant, amidst the gloom of fanaticism, exhibited unmolested, entertainments of declamation and music, after the manner of the ancients, at Rutland House; and in 1658 removed to the Cockpit, Drury-lane, where he performed until the eve of the Restoration. In the year after, Mr. Rhodes fitted up the Cockpit, and procured actors entirely new to the stage, two of whom, Betterton and Kyneston, were his apprentices. The old actors likewise assembled, and performed at the Red Bull in St. John-street. Sir William Davenant, in consequence of having had a patent from

from Charles the first before the civil wars broke out, was now favoured with a new one and Thomas Killigrew, Esq. received another.—— Rhodes's company were employed by Sir William and the rest of the performers by Killigrew—the former were stiled the Duke of York's company, and the latter the King's. They were all sworn by the Lord Chamberlain as servants of the crown. The King's company removed from the Red Bull, to a new built house in Gibbon's Tennis-court, near Clare-market; and thence to a more convenient house in Drury-lane, which opened, April 8, 1662. The Duke of York's company had removed also from the Cockpit to the new theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields, which opened in 1662, having previously had rehearsals at Apothecaries Hall.

The principal performers in the King's company, were

MEN.

Hart, Mohun, Burt, Wintersel, Lacy, Cartwright, Clun, Joe Haines, Griffin, Goodman, &c.

WOMEN.

Mrs. Corey, Mrs. Marshall, Mrs. Knep, Mrs. Boutel, and Mrs. E. Gwyn.

In the Duke of York's company.

MEN.

Betterton, Sheppy, Kyneston, Nokes, Moseley, Floyd, Harris, Price, Richards, Blagden, Smith, Sandford, Medburn, &c.

WOMEN.

Mrs. Davenport, Mrs. Saunderson, Mrs. Davies, Mrs. Long, Mrs. Gibbs, Mrs. Norris, Mrs. Holden, and Mrs. Jennings.

Theatrical entertainments were now in great vogue, but the fire which destroyed the metropolis in 1666, put a stop to the further progress of the drama. After a discontinuance of 18 months both houses were again opened: for awhile they were successful, but novelty being wanting, Sir William turned his thoughts on a new theatre in Dorset-garden; but died before the building was finished. It opened in 1671, under the management of Lady Davenant, Charles Davenant, Betterton and Harris. The old house being more successful, they had recourse to pageantry: a fire however, having demolished Drury-lane, the contest for awhile ended. On being rebuilt uuder the direction of Sir Christopher Wren, it opened March 26, 1674. The preference was now given to Davenport's theatre, on account of the superior scenery and decorations; sound and shew prevailed over sense and reason; upon which it was mutually agreed, that both houses should unite, accordingly the Duke's company quitted Dorset-garden, and removed to Drury-lane. This junction took place in 1682.

This union, as supposed, was not productive of profit, and the old patentees sold their authority to new adventurers. Mr. C. Davenant assigned his patent to A. Davenant, Esq. in 1687; who sold it again to Christopher Rich in 1690.

CHAP. V

CHAP. V.

From Rich's management to Booth's.

RICH's management, or rather mismanagement, having provoked the players, their complaints were laid before King William, and a licence procured for another theatre, within the walls of Tennis-court, in Lincolns-inn-fields, which was supported by people of quality. It opened April 30, 1695, but the inhabitants finding themselves incommoded by the concourse of coaches, which the playhouse drew together, went to law with the proprietors; and by the introduction of buffoons and tumblers, the stage was brought to the lowest degree of contempt.—It was also attacked for licentiousness and profligacy—prosecutions were commenced against some of the performers for repeating profane and indecent words—several were found guilty, and Betterton and Mr. Bracegirdle were actually confined: these severities were, however, of use, as they tended to refine the taste.

Both theatres in Dorset-garden and Drury-lane, were made alternate use of by the managers, who had hitherto performed under the united patents, but about this time the former was deserted; and as the latter was small, and the actors at variance, a new and magnificent theatre was erected by subscription, under the direction of Sir John Vanburgh, to whom Mr. Betterton assigned his licence, and who associated with Mr. Congreve. This theatre opened April 9, 1705; with an Italian Opera, which met with but little success, and Mr. Con-

greve at last gave up his share and interest wholly to Sir John, who became also disgusted with the management, whereupon it devolved to Mr. Owen Swiney, a mere adventurer without property, who had been employed by Mr. Rich as under manager.

When Mr. Rich got possession of Drury-lane theatre, he paid but little attention to the property of any of the parties, and the concerns became of so little worth, that Sir Thomas Skipwith, who had an equal right with Rich, in a frolic made a present of his share to Colonel Brett, who, through the interposition of the Lord Chamberlain, effected a re-union of the two companies in 1708. The Haymarket was then appropriated to Italian Operas, and Drury-lane to English Plays.—Sir Thomas Skipwith having repented of his generosity, Colonel Brett in anger relinquished his claim, and Rich again possessed himself of all the powers of the patent—altercations being now the result, the house was shut up by order of the Lord Chamberlain, June 7, 1709.

William Collier, Esq. now applied for, and obtained a licence to take the management of Drury-lane: having taken a lease, he took advantage of a rejoicing night, and with a hired rabble, turned Mr. Rich out of possession: who accordingly employed the remainder of his life in building a playhouse in Lincoln's-inn-fields, which opened in 1714.

By an agreement entered into by the rival managers, Swiney and his partners had the sole licence for acting plays, and Collier had the direction of the operas in the Haymarket, but the latter

ter becoming envious, Swiney was obliged to return to the Haymarket, over which he had presided before, and Collier, Wilks, Dogget and Cibber remained at Drury-lane, which now acquired so much fame, that Swiney was ruined and obliged to leave the kingdom.

In 1714, on the death of Queen Anne, Sir Richard Steele procured his name to be inserted instead of Collier's, in a new licence jointly with the other managers, which connection lasted many years. Lincoln's-inn-fields was also opened under the direction of Mr. John Rich: the prohibition which the patent had been long under, being removed, he now introduced pantomimes, to get the better of his antagonists.

The business of the stage was now carried on successively till 1720, when the Lord Chamberlain being disgusted with Mr. Cibber, forbad him to perform—Sir Richard Steele had also incurred equal resentment, and an order of silence was enforced against the managers.

In 1720, a new playhouse was built by Mr. Potter, a carpenter in the Haymarket; but only with a view of being occasionally hired for dramatic exhibitions.

In 1729, Mr. Odell began the building of Goodmans-fields theatre, but was obliged to abandon his design, by the clamour that was raised against it. It was afterwards revived by Mr. Giffard with some degree of success.

The patent for Drury-lane was now renewed, though Booth by indisposition, was rendered incapable of performing.

CHAP. VI.

Higmore's management—two Riots—Lord Chesterfield's famous Speech on the Play-bill—Garrick's appearance—the French players driven out of the kingdom, &c. Fleetwood's management—transfer of the Patent to Lacey and Garrick.

MR. Booth from an ill state of health, deeming it adviseable to dispose of his share in the theatre, the following lucky accident presented him with a purchaser. John Higmore, Esq. a gentleman possessed of 800l. per annum, performed the character of Lothario for a wager of one hundred pounds, and brought a crowded house—his vanity led him to other attempts though unsuccessful, and consequently becoming enamoured with the theatre, he gave Mr. Booth 2500l. for one half of his third share, bargaining for all the power, as he was to act for Mr. Booth in the management. This gentleman afterwards purchased Mr. Cibber's *whole* share on easier terms, being 3000l. guineas; and thus came into possession of half the power of the patent. The theatre being now in ignorant hands, a revolt began to shew itself among the capital performers, which was spirited up by Mr. Theophilus Cibber, who opened the little theatre in the Haymarket with *Love for Love* in opposition. This affair immediately threw the whole town into party, and Higmore was entirely deserted. Application was made to law, when the learned gentlemen recommended to take up the performers of the little theatre as *vagrants*. Harper, the most eminent,

eminent, was singled out and sent to Bridewell, but by other learned gentlemen it was proved that, being a house-keeper, he was *not* a vagrant. These proceedings, however, put a stop to the career of our rebellious but enterprising adventurers.

One Charles Fleetwood, Esq. now purchased the whole patent for little more than Higmore gave for the half. Being a gentleman of fortune and fashion, he began his reign with great dignity, having regained the revolters, and put in a proper train the business of the house: he continued in the management of the theatre from 1734, to 1745, during which time there were two riots, the only memorable occurrences of this period. The first was about a French dancer, who was taken ill, but whose name was published three nights running in a pantomime, without the least apology. The first night the house bore their disappointment with patience, the second, they only hissed, but on the third, they were so provoked, that headed by a *noble marquis*, they ordered the ladies out, and did great damage to the house; the next morning, the marquis repented his rashness, and sent an hundred pounds to the manager, as a *small* atonement, who was obliged to make up all the other deficiencies.

The second riot was about the managers continuing raised prices to old entertainments. The original prices were 4*s*. boxes, 2*s*. 6*d*. pit, 1*s*. 6*d*. first gallery, and 1*s*. second ditto; these prices were usually raised on the first nights of a new play, or the introduction of a pantomime, but now the advanced prices were kept up entirely. The manager was called for, and it was afterwards agreed, that

that full prices should be constantly paid at the doors, but that the advanced money should be returned to those who did not stay for the entertainment.

Though this proposal was acquiesced with, very few ever took their advanced money, by which means it became the common prices of admission.

In 1737, the unpopular bill for restraining the licentiousness of the stage had passed: the following is an extract of the famous speech of Lord Chesterfield on that occasion.

My Lords,

The Bill now before your Lordships having pass'd the House of Commons with so much precipitancy, as even to get the start of one that deserved all the respect which could be paid it, has set me on considering why so much regard has been paid to this; why it has been pushed into the house at the close of a session, and pressed in so singular a manner; but I confess, I am yet at a loss to find out the great occasion. My Lords, I apprehend it to be a Bill of a very extraordinary, and a very dangerous nature, and although it seems designed only as a restraint on the licentiousness of the stage-I fear, it looks farther and tends to a restraint on the liberty of the press, a restraint even on liberty itself.—I have gathered from common talk, while this Bill was moving in the House of Commons, that a play was offered the players, which if my account was right, is truly of a most scandalous, a most flagitious nature. What was the effect? Why they not only refused to act it, but carried

it

it to a certain person in the administration, as a sure method to have it suppress'd. Could this be the occasion of the Bill Surely no, the caution of the players could never occasion a law to restrain them, it is an argument in their favour, and a material one, in my opinion, against the Bill, and is to me a proof that the laws are not only sufficient to deter them from acting what they know would offend, but also to punish 'em in case they should venture to do it.—My Lords, I must own I have observed of late a remarkable licentiousness in the stage. There were two plays acted last winter that, one would have thought, should have given the greatest offence, and yet were suffer'd without any censure whatever; in one of these plays the Author thought fit to represent Religion, Physic, and the Law, as inconsistent with Common Sense; the other was founded on a story very unfit for a theatrical entertainment at this time of day, a story so recent in the minds of Englishmen, and of so solemn a nature, that unless it be from the pulpit, we might not be reminded of it. The stage may want regulation, the stage may have it, and yet be kept within bounds without a new law for the purpose. I am against this Bill, as an unnecessary, and as a dangerous one, and shall give your Lordships my reasons for this opinion.—My Lords, I observe a power is to be lodged in the hands of one person only, to judge and determine the offences made punishable by this Bill, a power too great to be in the hands of any one. When I say this, I am sure I do not mean to give the least the most distant offence, to that noble person who fills

fills the post of Lord Chamberlain, and whose natural candour and love of justice, I know would not permit him to exercise that power but with the greatest justice and humanity, and was it consistent with the nature of property, or were we sure that the successors in that office would always be persons of such distinguished qualities, I think such a power could not be trusted in a safer hand.—My Lords, one of the greatest good we can enjoy is liberty; the best things have allays; liberty has its allay, licentiousness is the allay of liberty, it is the excrescence and the ebullition of it. When I touch the one, it is with a fearful, with a trembling hand, lest I should unwarily do a violence to the other. Is a play a libel upon any one? The law is sufficient to punish the offender, and the person in this case has a singular advantage, he can be at no difficulty to prove who is the publisher of it, the player himself is the publisher, and there can be no want of evidence to convict him.—When we complain of the licentiousness of the stage, I fear we have more reason to complain of bad measures in our policy, and a general decay of virtue and good morals among us. Let the censured mend their actions, and censure will retort upon the censurer, the ridiculer make only himself ridiculous, and odium will fall to the ground. In the Roman story there is an instance applicable to the present occasion: during the triumvirate of Pompey, Crassus, and Sylla, one Diphilus a poet had wrote a play wherein Pompey was particularly mark'd out, (Pompey at that time was as well known by the name

name of Magnus as Pompey) and in a speech of the play where the bad measures of the time were exploded, it concluded with these words, Et miseria nostra tu es Magnus, upon which the audience gave a universal clap of applause and were so struck with the wit and force of the expression, that Cicero says, they made the actor repeat it a hundred times. What did Pompey (who was present on this occasion)? Did he resent the satire or the people's applause? No, his conduct was wise and prudent, he reflected justly within himself that some actions he had been guilty of had made him unpopular; from that hour he began to alter his measures, he regain'd by degrees the people's esteem, grew popular again, and then neither feared their wit, nor felt their satire.—My Lords, the stage preserved and kept up to its true purpose, should, no doubt, only represent those incidents in the actions and characters of men as may tend to the discouragement of vice, and the promoting of virtue, and good life; nor does it vary from its institution when it helps us to judge of the vices and follies of the times; and though the Romans, at the time I have mentioned, were declining in their liberty, yet it is plain they had not then, lost the use of it; but when the stage is under power and controul, such instances are not to be met with. In the life of that wonderful and excellent genius Moliere, the author tells us, that when his *Tartuffe* was acted, the Archbishop of Paris thought the play reflected upon him, and fancied that Moliere had taken his measure for one of the principal characters. Upon this, the Archbishop goes to the King and makes heavy complaints

plaints against Moliere, and though the play was justly admired, as an excellent piece, yet to please the Archbishop the King silenced the actors, and forbid the play. Moliere some time after, in the presence of the Prince de Conde, took notice to him how hard his fate was to be under the King's displeasure for a play that was founded upon the strictest rules of morality, virtue, and religion, when at the same time Harlequin and his Italian troop were suffered to act the most indecent pieces imaginable, notoriously encouraging vice and immorality, and offensive to all religion in the world; the Prince answer'd him very aptly, I am not at all surprised at it, says he, for Harlequin only ridicules religion in general, whereas you have ventured to ridicule the prime minister of it. I must say freely, I am for no power that may exert itself in an arbitrary manner, the Court is always for favouring its own schemes, and is fond of making every thing in its power subservient to them; our stage has been formerly made very useful in this particular; in King Charles the second's time there was a licencer at court, which was the practice then. Why, when we were out of humour with Holland, Dryden the laureat wrote his play of the Cruelty of the Dutch at Amboyna. When the affair of the Exclusion Bill was depending, he wrote his Duke of Guise.—When the court took offence at the city, (where there was some property to preserve as well as to defend) the plays represented the citizens as a parcel of griping usurers and designing knaves, and, to make their characters compleat, cuckolds. The

cavaliers

cavaliers at that time who were to be flattered, though the worst of characters, were always very worthy honest gentlemen; and the dissenters, who were to be abused, were always scoundrels and quaint mischievous fellows. Teague (a notorious rogue that lived by rapine and plunder) was the fine gentleman; and he that could not follow Teague in his politics was a sad fellow, and capable of no trust whatsoever.—In this manner was the stage managed under a licenser. And though I have the greatest esteem for that noble lord in whose hands this power at present is designed to fall, and whose impartiality and judgment I have the greatest confidence in, yet sometimes a leaning towards the fashions of a court is hard to be avoided, and as to virtue and good morals, that is not always the place where they are to be found. My Lords, if it were necessary a Bill of this kind should pass, I am of opinion, the method proposed in this, to restrain the licentiousness complained of will not answer the purpose; for if it does not extend to the restraint of printing (which I hope it never will) it cannot produce that desired effect. When my Lord Chamberlain has marked a play with his refusal, may it not be printed? Will it not be printed with double the advantage, when it shall be insinuated, that it was refused for having some character or strokes of wit or satire in it, that were not suffered to come on the stage? And will not the printer set the refusal in his title-page as a mark of value? Is it not natural to be fond of every thing that is forbid, and will it not be more likely to have

its effect among the people, by this means, when the printed play may cost but a shilling, and the seeing it acted will cost 3 or 4?—Does not the satire remain in print to be read and considered, when the offence in acting is over and forgot? I don't doubt but there are people who will sit down to write a play on purpose to have it refused, and that will be the only merit belonging to it; for I must observe to your Lordships that, although it is very difficult to write one that is fit to be accepted, yet it is easy enough to write one that is fit to be refused. The players I believe, are pretty sensible there are fewer guilty of the former than the latter. Wit is the property of those who have it, and very often the only property they have.—Thank God, we, my Lords, are better provided than to depend upon so precarious a support. I must own, I am not for laying any particular restraint upon wit; but, by this Bill, wit is to be delivered out to the public by retail, it is to be excised, my Lords, and the Lord Chamberlain is to have the honor of being the guager, the exciseman, the judge, and jury; and the poor author, who has not so much as a worthy commissioner to appeal to, must patiently undergo the rummaging of his goods for fourteen days together, before he can have them returned, and returned how? Why, perhaps, with a prohibition against the use of them.—No play was ever wrote but some of the characters, speeches, and expressions, might be interpreted to point out some person or another; it is impossible to write any thing for the stage that is not liable to the most unthought of constructions, it is not to be avoided, and though it

it may have the lawful passport to it, yet when it comes to be acted the people will make their applications: and here I cannot help observing, what an unthankful office it must prove to that noble Lord, who is to make the piece current, when reflections shall be fixed upon particular persons, and be authorised at the same time under his own hand. Such accidents will be no little uneasiness to that noble person, whose great conduct in life is well known, always to avoid giving the least offence to any one. My Lords, from laws of this nature I suspect very ill consequences, nor can I frame to myself any one good argument or reason for this Bill. It is an arrow that does but glance upon the stage; it gives its wound at a distance. No country ever lost its liberty at once, 'tis by degrees that work is to be done, by such degrees as creep insensibly upon you till 'tis too late to stop the mischief; like the shadowing of a colour, we may trace it from its first light into its deepest dye, but are not able to distinguish the several gradations of it. It is necessary that the briars and thorns should be removed, before power can clear itself for action; but then we see it taking long strides over a land—The Romans lost their liberty by restraining licentiousness; I hope we shall never do it at so dear a rate, and yet I fear we are clearing the way for those who may thank us hereafter for doing so much of the work ready to their hands. Our laws, I am well convinced, are already sufficient to punish licentiousness in any shape, and I can see no reason for a new one, that may be dangerous, and impartially must be allowed to be unnecessary."

This act having passed, the new theatre in Goodman's-fields was effectually destroyed, where Mr. Garrick the preceding season made his first appearance on any stage, in the character of Richard, by which towering strength, Goodman's-fields was a formidable enemy to the rival theatres. The little theatre in the Haymarket was also shut up.

A company of *French* strollers being now licenced to act, at the Haymarket, was nearly productive of fatal consequences.

So soon as the bill appeared for their playing, with the word *Authority* placed at the top, the public was stung to the quick, and thought themselves concerned to exert that liberty they enjoy, and to resent the affront put upon them. They filled the house, and played off all the artillery of catcalls, bells, &c. against the stage, and the miserable comedians suffered for sins not their own.

Notwithstanding the rhetoric of a noted Middlesex justice, or the menaces of three files of musketeers, who were planted upon the stage, completely armed, the audience were so polite, and so much English, that they would not permit them to go on with the play. The noise in the house began between 4 and 5; the cry on one side the galleries was, No soupe maigre, and the other side answered in a different tone, Beef and Pudding; and the general cry was, Pray remember the poor English players in gaol; no French strollers. The French ambassador was in the box, but went out as soon as the noise began. There was at the same time a great mob, who play'd their parts without doors, breaking the windows, and throwing potatoes, pippins and dirt in abundance. The comedy intend-

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ed for representation was, *The Embarrassments of Riches*, but no doubt, the business brought upon them the *embarrassments of poverty*.

The latter end of Mr. Fleetwood's reign was remarkable only for misery and distraction—theatrical historians charge him with duplicity and chicanery—suffice it to say, that Messrs. Lacy and Garrick, after much time being spent, in finding the best bidder for the patent crown, became the theatrical monarchs.

CHAP. VII.

Beard's management—Riots occasioned by an attempt to abolish half-prices—Theatrical revolutions—the Royalty theatre, &c.

FOR some years, the theatre in the Haymarket had been occupied in the summer-time, by virtue of licences from the Lord Chamberlain. It was made a theatre royal, July 1, 1766, a patent being then granted to Mr. Foote, who rebuilt the theatre, and opened it in 1767.

Mr. Beard succeeded his father-in-law, Mr. Rich, on his decease, and brought out several musical pieces at Covent-garden: an attempt was made in 1763, to abolish half-prices, which was productive of some theatrical squabbles at both houses, the first began at Drury-lane theatre, when a printed paper was industriously dispersed in the taverns, coffee-houses, &c. complaining of the managers of the theatres refusing admittance, at the end of the third act of a play, for half-price: and upon draw-

ing up of the curtain, when Messrs. Obrien and Holland began the play, they were interrupted; upon which Mr. Garrick came on the stage, and attempted to speak; but an uproar immediately began; and the ladies withdrawing, the benches were torn up, the glass lustres were broke and thrown on the stage, and a total confusion ensued, which prevented the play from going on; and about nine the house was cleared, the money being returned.

At Covent-garden theatre, redress being demanded, it was readily promised; upon which the performers were permitted to proceed.

The following address to the public, afterwards appeared in the Public Advertiser.

"The Managers of Drury-lane theatre, having been suddenly called upon, last night, to answer the charge of an innovation in regard to their prices, Mr. Garrick acquainted the audience, "That he was not conscious that the managers had done any thing in this respect, in which they were not fully authorised by the established usage of the theatre; and that, if there had been the slightest innovation, it should be rectified: and this unexpected complaint being grounded on the assertions contained in a printed paper, which had been, the same day, industriously circulated in coffee-houses, and distributed through every part of the the theatre, Mr. Garrick promised to publish a full answer to the charges contained in that paper; but the clamour still continuing, the performance of this play was entirely prevented. The managers, therefore, finding themselves under the necessity of informing the public,

public, that a full and satisfactory answer will be published accordingly: and it is hoped that they will, with their usual candour, suspend their judgment on this occasion till the appearance of such answer; which will be in a few days."

On the 26th, when the third music began at Drury-lane, the audience insisted on Britons Strike Home, and the Roast-beef of Old England; which were played accordingly. Mr. Holland coming in, to speak the prologue to Elvira, he was hissed off. Mr. Garrick immediately came on, but could not obtain a hearing. After a confused uproar which lasted some time, during which he remained on the stage in a state of mind that may be more easily conceived than expressed, a hundred voices calling out, Hear him, hear him, while as many others called out, Hear the Pit; he was asked from the Pit, Whether he would answer the question that should be put to him? He respectfully said, he would. The following question was then put, "Will you, or will you not, give admittance for half price, after the third act, except during the first winter of a new pantomime?" Mr. Garrick wanted to explain the reasons of his conduct in asking full prices during the first run of a new play; but could not obtain leave; He was desired to give an explicit answer; Yes, or No. After again attempting to speak to explain his conduct; he called out in some agony, not without a mixture of indignation, we may suppose, at the uncandid treatment he had received, Yes: and the audience expressed their triumph in the manner they usually express their applause. Mr. Ackman, an actor, who had incurred some displeasure on the preceding

preceding night, was next called upon to make an acknowledgement, which he did.

Mr. Moody, another actor, was then called for; but not being rightly understood on account of the noise, he was supposed to be refractory; and the audience insisting on his going on one knee, he went off, and Mr. Garrick was obliged to come in and promise that while Mr. Moody laboured under the displeasure of the audience, he should not appear again on the stage.

The next squabble took place at Covent-garden, in consequence of a printed bill being given away to the following purpose.

To the Frequenters of the Theatres.

"Gentlemen,

In defiance of the regulation which your resolution and steadiness lately established at Drury-lane theatre, and in which it was universally understood, that the managers of the other theatre has fully acquiesced, there appeared this day advertised the opera of *Artaxerxes*, with this remarkable notice, viz. "Nothing under the full price can be taken." It now therefore behoves you, gentlemen, to enforce your decisions, and convince the directors of Covent-garden playhouse, that a point once determined by the tribunal of the public, must and shall for ever remain a law, subject to no alterations but by their own authority.

I am, Gentlemen,

Feb. 23, 1763. Your humble servant,

An enemy to imposition."

Before the opera began, Mr. Beard was called for, and his answer being unsatisfactory, the audience

audience grew exasperated, and the house was considerably damaged. The managers accordingly inserted the following advertisement the next day.

"Feb. 25. 1763.

Whereas a very unjustifiable disturbance happened last night at this theatre; the managers think it incumbent upon them to acquaint the public, that when the opera of *Artaxerxes* was in rehearsal, it was determined that no expence should be spared to render the performance as elegant as the nature of so peculiar an entertainment would admit—this design occasioned so considerable an increase of the nightly charge, as was thought by many disinterested persons, would justify additional prices, but, to avoid giving the least umbrage, and in gratitude for the public indulgence on other occasions, no such advantage was attempted—when it is known, that the extraordinary nightly expence attending this performance, amounts to upwards of fifty pounds, it is humbly apprehended, no persons of justice and candour, will think the full price an exorbitant gratification for such unusual disbursements. The managers, therefore, flatter themselves, that a resolution to oppose the arbitrary and illegal demands of a particular set of persons (contrary to the general sense of the audience) will not be deemed arrogant or unreasonable, especially when those demands are enforced by means subversive of private property, and in violation of that decorum which is due to all public assemblies."

Peace being now proclaimed, the theatres resumed their wonted attraction. In 1766, *Mr.* Beard

Beard deemed it adviseable for his health to retire, and the succeeding year Messrs. Harris and Rutherford became purchasers of the patent—these gentlemen deeming their own abilities insufficient to carry on the business of the theatre, called in the assistance of Messrs. Powell and Colman, to the latter of whom, the conduct of the stage was entrusted:—violent disputes arose between the new managers, which produced a paper war; for an account of which, the reader is referred to the character of the patentees, in ROACH's *Memoirs of the Green Room.*

Mr. Rutherford sold his share to Messrs. Leake and Dogge, and Mr. Garrick transferred his interest in the theatre to Messrs. Sheridan, Dr. Ford, and Thomas Linley (now deceased). Mr. Colman, likewise, relinquished his interest in Covent-garden theatre, having agreed with Mr. Foote for the Haymarket theatre, for which he was to allow him an annual sum during life, which Mr. Foote lived to enjoy only one year. His death is attributed to a broken heart, in consequence of a malicious prosecution instituted against him, which the event of his trial freed him from.

Mr. Garrick after he had quitted the stage, continued to give the new patentees his assistance; but this was for a short time, death having deprived them, and the world of a valuable man, January 20, 1779. His last appearance on the stage was in the character of *Don Felix* in the *Wonder*, June 10, 1776.

A plan was suggested for a new theatre in Wellclose-square, and was erected by subscription, under

der the title of the Royalty theatre. The adventurers imagined, that by the sanction of the Governor of the Tower, they could perform plays, not considering, that the old theatre in Goodmans's-fields, was shut up in consequence of the Play Bill. Mr. Palmer of Drury-lane was appointed manager; but no sooner was the house finished, performers engaged, and authors at work, when the triumvirate began to publish the threats of law:

"Haymarket, Covent-garden, and Old Drury,
"Sent forth their edicts full of sound and fury."

The theatre *in spite of law*, opened in the summer of 1787, with the comedy of *As you like it*, and *Miss in her teens*, for the benefit of the London Hospital.

At the conclusion of the farce, Mr. Palmer delivered an address to the audience, in which he returned thanks, and complained of the conduct adopted against him by Messrs. Linley, Harris, and Colman, asserting Mr. Colman had known and approved of his scheme; and that Mr. Harris had assented to Mr. Quick's making an engagement with him, though he now threatened a prosecution; concluding, with a promise, that the house should open with a species of entertainment not subject to interruption.

Accordingly it opened again with entertainments like Sadler's Wells, notwithstanding which several of the performers were taken up as vagrants, the managers of the theatres royal, having still formed an alliance against them, defensive and offensive, in consequence of which, Sadler's Wells, and all the places of sing-song and recitative were obliged

to

to close till the dispute terminated. Some attempts were made to get the sanction of Parliament, but in vain: the Royalty theatre after a fruitless struggle was obliged to close, and now remains a monument of folly.

CHAP. VIII.

The present State of the Drama.

THE chief contest for these few years between the winter managers, seems to have been, who will present the public with a more extensive and elegant building—Candour must own, that the theatres were never more large nor magnificent than at present; but unfortunately for gallery visitors, if they do not enjoy their faculties of hearing and seeing to an extraordinary degree, they must lose the chief part of their entertainment.

The expence of inlaying and ornamenting the theatres, rendered it necessary to raise the prices: this was attended with no little danger, seeing it had been previously the cause of a riot—Drury-lane company were the first that ventured, on their removal to the Haymarket Opera House, while the new theatre in Drury-lane was building; the expence of this removal was the plea for encreasing the prices; but they had to encounter some difficulty before the audience would submit.——The managers of Covent-garden next ventured, having laid out a considerable sum on altering the theatre, this was productive of similar disturbances, which were

were overcome by the similar reasons being given.

The little theatre in the Haymarket having no pretence, still keeps to the old prices; but still it has an advantage which renders the old price equal to the new, there being no half price.

Mr. Colman kept the management for some time, till a fatal malady rendered him incapable, upon which his son officiated in his place.—Mr. Colman's disorder began in 1786, by an hemiplegia; the paralysis seized his brain in 1789; from which time he was totally deprived of his senses, and continued a deplorable instance that the best intellects and finest talents have but a precarious tenure in our "frail and feverish being."—Neither were his finances exempt from remarkable revolution. The greatest affluence, from considerable sources of wealth, long poured into his coffers, without having ultimately enriched them; and, without any waste imputable to known extravagance, it is probable, but from the unremitting exertions of his son, he would soon have experienced the ill effects of as severe a reverse in his fortune as in his faculties.—Colman originally intended his son for the bar, and entered him accordingly, after completing his education at Westminster and Oxford, in the Temple. But, perhaps, "whatever is" was never more "right" than in the adverse turn of young Colman's mind to his father's plan; for he, like the young Templar in the Spectator, "studied the passions themselves, when he should have been enquiring into the debates among men which arise from them:" and it was not very

likely that much progress would be made in a profession while an entire disgust to it, was accompanied with such circumstances as could only be relieved by his genius, from time to time, by drafts at a short notice, not on Coke and Littleton, but on the Muses, whom he generally found the only bankers he could rely on. And fortunate it was for him, at this time, that any bankers would answer his drafts, as his expenses were now encreased by the addition of a wife: for, soon after his resolution to relinquish the law, he married Miss Catharine Morris, and a trip to Gretna Green was the immediate consequence, where they were married Oct. 3, 1784. The fear of his father's displeasure at this event also imposed a silence on the transaction until Nov. 10, 1788; when they were again, but publicly, married at Chelsea Church, and the affair was openly avowed. On Mr. Colman's death in 1794, His Majesty was pleased to give the patent to his son, who is the present patentee.

A revolution, likewise, took place in the management of Drury-lane. Mr. Sheridan being inclined to dispose of his share, Messrs. Kemble, Storace, &c. &c. were mentioned as the intended purchasers; but the *whole* share was not parted with, for Messrs. Grubb and Richardson purchased only a *part*.

In treating of the present state of the Drama, we are sorry to say, that the muses are degenerating: —Tragedy seldom appears, except in rant and bombast, while sentimental Comedy is wholly exploded,

ploded, meer flimsy dialogues, full of pun and quibble being *The Rage!*

CHAP. IX.

The Theatre in Dublin, Riots, &c.

THOUGH London has been frequently indebted to her sister kingdom for some good performers, yet it must be acknowledged, that the only competent managers which Dublin ever had, have been from London.—The Irish theatre in its infancy, was wretched to the greatest degree, and the ignorance of the performers could only be equalled by their arrogance. The following truly whimsical story, will give the reader a much better idea of the origin of the Irish stage, than any common detail, which could be here set forth.

When Sir Richard Steele was master of the playhouse in London, a division took place among the actors of the theatre at Dublin, which occasioned a separation of that company. One of the principal performers, with a few understrappers, as guards, messengers, attendants, candle snuffers, &c. came over to list under Sir Richard's, their demands were comprehended in a few terms, namely, a dismission of the then principal actors of Si Richard's troop, and an admission of these gentry into their parts: this demand was made in form to Sir Richard, by Mr. William Poney the captain of their band. Sir Richard was a man of infinite humour but little temper, and when Mr. Poney

proposed his turning off his old comedians, he fell into a violent rage, and kicked his hat about, with all the huffing majesty of a theatrical monarch; but when he grew a little calmer, he begged a *review* of those notable gentlemen, who were desirous to be employed in his service. Mr. Poney immediately produced them, in order to shew their qualifications. The first he called was John Limekiln, who having no promising aspect, "Pray Mr. Poney," said Sir Richard, "what parts may this gentleman have been used to act, I cannot say he is what you call a good figure for the stage, I dare swear you never let him appear in comedy."—"No," replied Mr. Poney, "we always used him for the *Murderer*, he shone particularly in the whisper, where the fellow tells *Macbeth*, he hath dispatched *Banquo*. We once tried him for *Chairman* in the *Committee*, but he would not do; I recommend him as a prompter, or what we call in Ireland a *remembrancer*." The next was Sir Simon Shadow, who being asked what his province was, replied—"Alack Sir, I was by trade a linen draper, but thinking I had talents for the stage, I entered into the company, and was employed as woman's taylor, I could not act indeed myself, but I used to swear Mr. Poney spoke like an angel, for which, Sir, he got me a regular salary."—"Pho," said Sir Richard peevishly, "must I take a fellow for an actor because he said another acted well? Come, Sir, your next." "Here, Mr. Bottle," said Mr. Poney, "come forth:" "This gentleman, Sir," said he, presenting him to Sir Richard, "has seldom played any thing but the lawyer, but he is equally fit for any thing

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else."—"Mr. Jeffery Hill, come forth:" "And what can he act," said Sir Richard? "Any part," said Mr. Poney, "that does not require speaking. Here, Peter Bullcalf, where are you?" Peter stepp'd forth with his tongue out of his mouth, but without speaking a syllable. "Well, Mr. Bullcalf," said Sir Richard, "are you as compleat an actor as the last gentleman? What can you do?" Bullcalf roll'd his tongue about, sputter'd out a plentiful quantity of dew, and then roar'd.—— "Zounds!" said Sir Richard, "what part do you call this, Mr. Poney? "Sir," replied he, "he is a young beginner, and never performed any thing but the *Monster*, in *Perseus* and *Andromeda*. "An excellent troop of comedians truly," said Sir Richard! "Here are two who never acted but short parts, one that only said you could act, and two that never could speak at all. But pray, Sir, are your women all as silent as the rest of your company? let us see them." Mr. Poney stepp'd out, and returned with four old fellows drest with blue aprons and black hats, and the first with a long muslin nightrail. "Hey day!" quoth Sir Richard, "are these the ladies?" "Sir," said Mr. Poney, "they supply the places of women: these are four gentlemen who are famous for performing the witches in *Macbeth*. The first, Sir, is Mr. Samuel Mouldy, who used formerly to make motions, or puppet shews: he has an excellent voice for shewing a *Maramote*, and singing to a German organ. Let me recommend this gentleman to you for a top actress. Take off his night-

rail and new dress him, and he shall play *Lady Betty Modish*, *Lady Townly*, or any other genteel part with the first woman in your company. These other three, are Mr. John Rushlight, Mr. Francis Feeble, and Mr. Thomas Wart; the latter is particularly excellent at dumb shew." "But pray," said Sir Richard, "have you no real women at all in your troop? Nothing but these equivocal personages?" "A real woman, yes. Sir, that I have, as real a woman, I believe, as ever was produced upon the stage; a woman, Sir, that can out-do her own out-doings. Sir, she has a real a voice, as real action, as real passion, as any real woman of them all. In short, Sir, you shall see her——Here—my dear, come forth like raving *Nourhamal* in *Aurengzebe*, when they tell the Sultan,

"The empress has the antichamber past,
"And hither moves in most disorder'd haste;
"Her looks the stormy marks of anger wear."

Here is a real woman for you: I am sure I have found her so." "Pray," said Sir Richard, calmly, "what may Mrs. Poney's particular turn be?" "Sir," said her spouse, the first part she played was *Columbine* in a farce; but of late years, Sir, she has attempted, with great success, the first parts in tragedy. She particularly shines in *Lady Macbeth*, *Lady Wronghead*, and *Lady Loverule* in *The Devil to Pay*. Thus, Sir, you have seen my troop, and believe me, they will make you the richest man in Europe, if you will but employ them instead

instead of those blundering fellows you have already." "That I much doubt," said Sir Richard; "but pray, Mr. Poney, let me have a sample of your own abilities, a speech that corresponds with your own genius the best; upon which Mr. Poney began:

"Obey'd as sov'reign by thy subjects be,
"But know that I alone am king of me!
"I am as free as nature first made man,
"E'er the base laws of servitude began,
"When wild in woods the noble savage ran."

This he vomited out with the utmost convulsion of rant and fury. "As I take it," said Sir Richard, "this is *Almanzor*, the frantic hero in the *Conquest of Granada*." "True," replied Mr. Poney, "it was my top part." "It might have pleased in Ireland," said Sir Richard, "but it will not do the business here. Be so good to favour me with a few lines out of some other play."

Mr. Poney.

"Thou want'st them both, or better thou would'st
"know,
"Than to let factions in thy kingdoms grow,"

"I believe you forgot," interrupted Sir Richard, "that this is the same play: I begg'd you to repeat me some lines out of another."—Mr. Poney then repeated the following lines from the same play.

"My fate is fix'd so far above thy crown,
"That all thy men
"Piled on thy back can never pull it down.

"But

" But at my ease thy destiny I send,
" By ceasing from this hour to be thy friend.
" Thou can'st no title to my duty bring—
" I'm not thy subject, and my soul's thy king.
" Farewell——when I am gone,
" There's not a star of thine dare stay with thee.
" I'll whistle thy tame fortune after me.
" What are ten thousand subjects, such as they?
" If I am scorn'd——I'll take myself away."

Sir Richard had scarce patience to hear him through his rhapsody, but Mr. Poney had work'd himself up, and then there was no stopping him. " Since, Sir," said he, " you can think of no part but *Almanzor*'s, let me put you in mind of one or two, which take mightily on our stage, and without which, a man cannot be a principal performer here. Pray let me hear how you would speak those lines in *Tamerlane* that begin—" Well was it for the world"—Mr. Poney then went on:

" When on their borders neighbouring princes
" met,
" Frequent in friendly parle, by cool debates
" Preventing wasteful war—but from Madrid
" Accept great king to-morrow from my hand
" The captive head of conquer'd Ferdinand."

" Alas!" cry'd Sir Richard, " why Mr. Poney, you are running back into *Almanzor*; you cannot keep to the point for three lines together: pray try what you can do with *Cato*'s fine speech in the beginning of the last act. Mr. Poney composed himself and began.

It

" Is must be so—Plato thou reason'st well—
" The word which I have given shall stand like
" fate,
" Not like the king's, that weather-cock of state.
" He stands so high with so unfix'd a mind,
" Two factions turn him with each blast of wind
" But now he shall not veer—my word is past;
" I'll take his heart by th' roots and hold him fast."

" Zounds!" said Sir Richard, " I have no patience with this eternal *Almanzor*: I'll try you but once more; let us have the speech of *Brutus* to *Cassius*.

Mr. Poney.

" Remember March, the ides of March remember,
" Did not great Julius bleed for justice sake?
" What villain touch'd his body, that did stab,
" And not for justice? What, shall one of us,
" That struck the foremost man of all this world
" But for supporting robbers; shall we now
" Contaminate our fingers with base bribes?
" And sell the mighty space of our large honors
" For as much trash as may be grasped thus—?
" Honour is what myself and friends I owe,
" And none can lose it who forsake a foe;
" Since then your foes now happen to be mine,
" Tho' not in friendship we'll in interest join—

" This is too much," said Sir Richard, " to tack this damn'd noisy *Almanzor* to one of the most expressive speeches in Shakspeare. I won't trouble you to rehearse any more of him, but will tell you a story, which your being able to act nothing but a ranting hero brings into my mind.

A certain

A certain good-natur'd gentleman received a letter from a friend of his, to recommend the bearer, who was a painter, to his protection, and begged he would employ him: the gentleman had lately fitted up a new hall, and wanted a large piece to fill one end of it: he told the painter he shonld want a picture for it," and said he, "you shall chuse the subject yourself——What shall it be?" After hesitating a moment—"What think you of the Judgment of Solomon?" replied the painter. "Why aye," said the gentleman, "it will admit a good many figures and decorations; I don't care if it is." He then carried the painter into a closet; "and here," said he, "I want a small picture for the chimney-piece; what story would make a pleasant liitle piece?" The artist seemed to consider a little, and then, scratching his head, with great taste replied; "Why suppose you have a little Judgment of Solomon." The gentleman started, but being of an easy, complying temper, thought that it would be well enough to have the same story told in large and in little, and so gave his consent: but not thinking that he had still found work enough for his friend's painter, he bethought himself of a summer-house, where he sometimes drank a chearful bottle, the cieling of which was out of repair: he carried the painter thither, and said, "I should like to have some gay little history painted here—can you think of none that would be proper for such a sort of room?" "Oh, yes, Sir, said he, "there is not a cleverer story for the purpose than the Judgment of Solomon".

Solomon"———Here Sir Richard lost all patience, and kick'd Mr. Poney out of doors, who had just learn'd to draw one subject, and was fit for nothing else in the world.

This humorous story, though partly a burlesque, conveys a sufficient idea of the beginning of the Irish theatre; which soon, however, attained a degree of eminence, and became a nursery for performers. The stage, however, in Dublin was always in a languid state, except, when there were *rival theatres*, it was remarked that when *one* manager only resigned, the theatre was neglected for the want of entertainment, which the spirit of emulation only afforded.

After the deaths of Ashbury and Elrington, the theatres of Dublin were so ill directed, that few performers of any degree of eminence, either arose or resorted thither. The theatre in Aungier-street was built in 1728, by subscription; and about 1740, dramatic performancces began again to recover their dignity.

In the beginning of 1746, Victor went over with Sheridan as sharers and adventurers, and this season the *Fair Penitent* was represented on the Irish boards to the greatest perfection, *Lothario* being performed by Garrick, *Horatio* by Sheridan, and *Altamont* by Barry; but the excellent acting which now graced the Dublin stage, was frequently interrupted by theatrical squabbles. On the 19th of January, 1747, a terrible dispute was occasioned by one Mr. Kelly, who was inflamed with wine, having insulted some of the actresses, particularly Miss

Miss Bellamy, behind the scenes. Mr. Sheridan the manager, who had rented Smock-alley for two years, now appeared, dressed in the character of *Esop*, which was to be the play: provoked at the ill behaviour of Mr. Kelly, he turned him out; the offender immediately went to the pit, hissed him, and threw an orange that hit him on the nose. Mr. Sheridan then applied himself to the audience, who all clapped him, and with one voice, cried for Kelly's being turned out; upon which he was taken into custody by the constable, but let go immediately. This exasperated Kelly so much, that he went immediately to Sheridan's room, called him rogue, rascal, scoundrel and vagabond, which so enraged Sheridan, that he beat him soundly, and turned him out of the house. Two nights after Mr. Kelly and his friends beset the house (of which Sheridan had notice, and did not go) abused the women, went into all the dressing rooms in search of the manager, and in a warlike manner, stabbed all the trunks, boxes and clothes, to the great prejudice of the shapes and buskins. The next night that Mr. Sheridan appeared on the stage, he applied to the audience in a handsome speech, and said he would abide by their decision; which was with loud claps, that he should play; and then he went through his part without opposition. But the consequence was, that the gentlemen (as they called themselves) made a party of hot-headed young fellows against him; and the next night (which was for the benefit of the Hospital for Incurables) as soon as the curtain was drawn, they all cried out, no play, unless Sheridan asks pardon

of

of Mr. Kelly, and all the gentlemen; then clapping and hissing began, which continued till Mr. Kelly's party got the better; and the manager retired, and would not ask pardon, as he had not given any offence: this raised such a clamour, that the audience broke up, all the Boxes and Pit, except three rows, being filled with ladies, who, were terribly frightened.—The next day war was declared on both sides, papers being published pro and con. Upon this repeated ill treatment several affidavits were made against Kelly, and others against Sheridan; bills were presented by both parties to the Grand Jury. The trial came on at the King's Bench, when Sheridan was soon acquitted; but Mr. Kelly and one Mr. Brown, were found guilty of assaults on Mr. Sheridan and the actresses. They both received sentence; Kelly was ordered to pay 100l. for the first assault, 200l. for the second, and 200l. for the third, a month's imprisonment, and to find security for his good behaviour for seven years. Brown was fined 100l. and ordered to give security for his good behaviour for a year.

In the course of the trial, Mr. Sheridan while on the table answering the questions proposed to him by the Court and the Bench, a very learned counsellor on the side of the prisoner got up, and said, "He wanted to see a curiosity, I have often seen a gentleman soldier, and a gentleman taylor; but I have never seen a gentleman player." Mr. Sheridan, who was well dressed, bowed modestly and said, "Sir, I hope you see one now."

Shortly after this squabble, the theatre was shut up, by the authority of the Master of the Revels, till quietude was restored—it opened again under the management of Mr. Sheridan, who made some very expensive engagements. In 1749 Messrs. Theophilus Cibber, Digges, and Mossop made their appearance; this was a profitable season to the manager—the sum total was increased two thousand pounds, beyond any of the preceding years. The ensuing season Mr. King and Mrs. Woffington appeared: afterwards Mrs. Green, Mrs. Ward, &c.

Before the breaking out of the party rage and disputes in Parliament, the tragedy of *Mahomet* was singled out by the manager to be revived, the three principal parts were cast in the following manner:

Zaphna	Mr. Sheridan.
Alcanor	Mr. Digges.
Palmira	Mrs. Woffington.

The anti-courtiers pleased with this tragedy, were resolved to support it, and *encored* from the Pit Mr. Digges in the following speech:

———" If ye Powers divine,
" Ye mark the movements of this nether world,
" And bring them to account, crush, crush those
" vipers,
" Who singled out by the community,
" To guard their rights, shall for a grasp of ore,
" Or paltry office sell them to the foe!

Mr. Digges, though much surprised, very readily

readily spoke the whole speech over again, for which he was reprimanded by the manager in a green room lecture; but the manager having very imprudently repeated the play, because bespoke by some ladies, the speech was again encored; upon which Mr. Digges addressed the audience, begging them to excuse him, as his compliance would be highly injurious to him: hereupon, Sheridan the manager was called for, but instead of appearing, he sent the prompter to acquaint them, that if the play could not go on in quiet, the money should be returned:—the uproar still continued, and Mr. Sheridan, in spite of the entreaties of his friends, left the theatre; upon which the house was demolished, and scenery, &c. torn to pieces.

Mr. Sowdon succeeded Mr. Sheridan as manager, in conjunction with Mr. Victor——the tragedy of *Mahomet* was repeated by command of the audience, and the same speech was encored and repeated. Mr. Sheridan on his reappearance in Dublin, was obliged to make an apology for his past conduct.

Mr. Barry now opened Crow-street theatre, in opposition to Smock-alley—the latter held out for some time, but disappointed of auxiliaries by the loss of the Dublin, from Parkgate, among whom was Mr. Theophilus Cibber, was obliged after many laudable struggles to give up the contest. The company upon being dissolved by Messrs. Victor, &c. resolved to perform for *themselves*, and accordingly the following advertisement appeared.—

THEATRE ROYAL.

May 2, 1759.

" As Mr. Sheridan by a letter to Mr. Victor, closed his interest in this season's performance, on Friday last, the 27th of April, we, whose names are underwritten, have determined to perform for our joint profit, through this present term. We cannot address the public on this occasion, without first expressing our most grateful thanks for the constant instances of favor and protection, which we have experienced through the whole course of the season: at a time also, when every endeavour was used, and every theatrical art exerted to oppose a set of persons, who were unexpectedly deserted and abandoned.

Unforeseen losses will, it is hoped recommend us to the patronage of the town. And we beg leave to assure the public, that it shall be our pride and study to perform the ensuing representations, with as much accuracy and diligence, now *we are left to our own conduct*, as we have been compelled to suffer irregularity and confusion, from having been subjected to *a variety of disappointments*.

W. Digges,	H. Brown,
J. Sparks,	J. Heaphy,
L. Kennedy,	W. F. Glover,
J. Wilder,	J. Ryder,
G. Hayley,	F. Aicken,
J. Watson,	T. Farrell,
R. Hurst,	S. Ward,
E. Kennedy,	S. Wilder,
M. Phillips,	E. Farrell,

A. Mason. E. Glover, E. Storer."

This

This adversisement did but little good, as their endeavours ended with three or four unsuccessfull performances.

In 1759, Mr. Brown took the reins, but he held them only for two years, when he was succeeded by Mr. Mossop, who was manager till his death, 1771. Mr. Ryder then became director, which office he filled with more credit than profit, till 1782, encountering during that period, the several vicissitudes of Irish managements. Their ill success may indeed be attributed at their aim to monopolize. Ryder, like his predecessor and successor, rented more than one theatre at a time, and yet opposition could not be prevented. The little theatre in Capel-street under Mr. Dawson became a formidable enemy, being supported by Lewis, Miss Young, &c. Fishamble-street, also, under the management of Vandermere, made some stand against him.—At last Ryder's circumstances having obliged him to give up the theatre in Smock-alley, as he now occupied that in Crow-street, Mr. Daly, the present manager, got possession of Smock-alley, which Ryder said, he had left on account of its ruinous condition, and now it was The City Theatre, *versus*, The Theatre Royal.—Mr. Ryder during the latter end of his reign, took Mr. Crawford into partnership; but both managers were obliged to surrender.—The performers then became *all* managers together, and kept the house open for a *few nights*.——The following list of performers played under Mr. Ryder's management.

Mr. and Mrs. Barry,	Mr. Sheridan,
Mr. Foote,	Mr. Henderson,
Mr. Lewis,	Mr. Dodd,
Mr. J. Palmer,	Mr. Smith,
Mr. T. Aicken,	Mr. Webster,
Mr. Du Bellamy,	Mrs. Abingdon,
Mrs. Hartley,	Miss Catley,
Miss Pope,	Miss Wewitzer, &c.

Daly now remained *solus* in the field, till Giordani and Leoni opened the little theatre in Capel-street for musical pieces—this became the fashionable house; but the imprudence of the managers shortened their reign. Owenson afterwards opened Fishamble-street and shut it again.

A riot in Dublin in 1785, when the Lord-lieutenant went to the theatre, gave Mr. Daly an opportunity (notwithstanding his protestation on the stage, that he would obey the public, whose servant *alone* he was) of obtaining an exclusive patent, by favoring the ministerial side. Oulton in his History of the Theatres, tells us, that "the late Mr. Colman had made application for such a patent, and was denied it."—Amazing! that Mr. Daly should obtain what a man of merit, both as manager and author was refused. The patent of Dublin, however, is not *exclusive*, as the Lord Lieutenant may grant as many as he pleases for a certain period. Nor does the manager reap much profit from his monopoly—the people of fashion give the preference to Astley's, and the theatre in Fishamble-street is hired for private entertainments, and supported by the nobility.

Mr.

Mr. Daly removed from Smock-alley to Crow-street; and the former is now converted into a warehouse. During Mr. Daly's management, the Irish have been entertained by

Mr. Kemble, Mrs. Siddons,
Mr. Digges.

(This last gentleman having appeared again in *Alcanor* in *Mahomet*, was encored by the spirited Irish, in the very speech which occasioned the riot in Sheridan's time; which he immediately repeated.)

Mr. Pope, Mr. Holman,
Mr. Middleton, Mr. Lewis,
Mr. Wathen, Mr. Kelly,
Mr. Lee Lewis, Miss Farren,
Mrs. Crouch, Miss Wallis,
Mrs. Fitzhenry, &c.

Dancing Dogs, Poneys, Tumblers, &c.

CHAP. X.

The Theatre in Edinburgh.

THE drama on its first introduction to Scotland, laboured under all those difficulties, which generally attend every beginning. This stage, however, soon claimed a respectable place in dramatic annals, and before it was *royal*, was resorted to by actors of acknowledged merit, among whom we find,

Mr. Lee, Mr. Love,
Mr. Digges, Mr. Dexter,

Mr.

Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Foote,
Mr. Yates, Mr. Sowdon,
Mr. Wilkinson, Mr. Shuter,
Mr. Woodward, Mrs. Ward,
Mrs. Hopkins, Mrs. Bellamy,
Mrs. Yates, Mrs. Hartley, &c.

Mr. Ross obtained his Majesty's patent for a theatre royal at Edinburgh, and generally furnished a good company from the malecontents of Drury-lane and Covent-garden.

Mr Ross let the Edinburgh theatre to Mr. Foote for three years, the first of which Mr. Foote occupied it himself, with the aid of Mr. Woodward, and had a very handsome share of profit. A particular register of the performances of that season, was published in the Whitehall Evening Post, under the title of *Momus in Edinburgh*. For the other two years, Mr. Digges had it by a sub-lease from Mr. Foote, and both of these proved abundantly successful, in so much, that it is said he cleared in one season 800l. Upon the expiration of Mr. Foote's lease, Mr. Digges took a new lease from Mr. Ross for seven years, commencing with the winter 1773-4. The rent was three hundred guineas a year, which was no small tax upon the drama of such a place as Edinburgh, where there were not two full audiences, and consequently the money must come almost constantly out of the same pockets.

The theatre was now very elegantly ornamented, and the company respectable, among whom were

Mr. and Mrs. Inchbald,
Mr. and Mrs. Wilson,
Mr. Death, Mrs. Webb, &c.

For

For several weeks, however, the manager was a loser, owing to the then numerous bankruptcies and consequent distresses. On this account Mr. Digges had recourse to novelty, which was attended with wonderful effect: a Mrs. Hunt from London, who had never appeared on any stage, enlisted under Mr. Digges's banners by the name of Mrs. Hunter; she received high applause in the *Jealous Wife*, and displayed such talents in several characters, as to draw pretty full houses. Next, arrived from Dublin Mr. Foote, who played a few weeks, and kept things much alive. About the same time and from the same place, arrived Mr. and Mrs. Jackson, who performed three nights in a tragedy called *Eldred*, written by Mr. Jackson upon an interesting story of private distress, the hint of which was taken from the beautiful story of Naboth's Vineyard.

Mr. Jackson succeeded Mr. Digges in the management, and met with the same vicissitudes of fortune; but at last being considerably involved, his creditors let the leases of the Glasgow and Edinburgh houses to Mr. Stephen Kemble. A warm contest now arose respecting this gentleman, (who was supported by the Lord Provost, the Lord Advocate, and the Dean of Faculty) and Mrs. Esten, who was a favorite in the town, and had likewise, many friends, who wished her to be manageress. Her particular patron, the Duke of Hamilton, and Mr. Dundas, procured the patent, and endued Mrs. Esten with the authority. Thus Mr. Kemble had the theatre and no power, and Mrs. Esten had the power and no theatre. After some

some dispute matters were accommodated, and Mr. S. Kemble made the manager.

CHAP. XI.

Biographical Memoirs of our late most eminent Performers, Garrick, Quin, Mrs. Yates, Woodward, Mrs. Bellamy, Weston, Shuter, Edwin, Ryder, Parsons, Baddeley, &c. also some recent theatrical affair, discovery of Shakspeares papers, &c.

IN this chapter we shall present our readers with some biographical memoirs of our late most eminent performers, and some theatrical anecdotes of a recent date. We have already mentioned Mr. Garrick as a performer at Goodman's-fields, and a manager at Drury-lane:—here, in honor due to this great actor, we shall now give some particulars of his life.

Mr. Garrick was the grand-son of a gentleman, who took refuge here from France, about the end of the last century, on account of the religious persecutions then so violent against the protestants. His name was Garrique, but our hero willing to anglicise it, altered the last syllable, and made it more familiar to an English ear. Mr. Garrick's father, obtained a commission in the army, and attained to the rank of major, in which capacity he retired upon half pay, and closed the remainder of his life at Hereford. This was the place that gave birth to the famous actor, in the month of October, 1716. His father flattering himself that he had interest

interest sufficient, intended him for the army; but his death before the youth had attained the age of maturity, prevented this design being carried into execution. He received the first rudiments of his learning under that great luminary of literature Dr. Samuel Johnson, and compleated his studies by the assistance of Mr. Colson, of Litchfield.

About the year 1736 Mr. Garrick repaired to the metropolis, with the view of entering a student of Lincoln's-inn; having ere now entirely dismissed his military plan of life. It is said that this journey was performed in company with his former tutor, Dr. Johnson, who being fatigued with the irksome labours of a teacher, had resolved to try the success of his literary talents in this great mart of learning: the event proved that he did not over rate his scientific abilities, as he had from his elaborate, classical and moral productions, for several years, been unrivalled at the summit of literature.

Mr. Garrick's pursuits being of a different kind, he accordingly took a different track. He, in consequence of the design of qualifying himself for the bar, engaged chambers in Lincoln's-inn; but he had not long applied himself to the study of the law, before he found Coke upon Littleton, authors so little calculated to engage his volatile genius, that he resolved upon giving up his pretensions to the law. He had not at this time turned his thoughts towards the stage, but finding an opportunity of entering into the wine trade, he embraced it, and continued to traffic in that commodity for some time. In this capacity he went over to Oporto, to

regulate

regulate some commercial affairs, and being introduced to the gentlemen of the factory, he met with a very cordial reception. At this time it was in agitation to give the English ladies a play, and Mr. Garrick was solicited to perform a part in it. It was upon this occasion, we understand, this gentleman first appeared upon any stage. The general approbation he met with in this first essay, inclined his thoughts to a theatrical life; and returning to England, in the beginning of the year 1741, he soon after made his appearance at the theatre in Goodman's-fields, then under the management of Mr. Giffard, in the character of *Richard the Third*. He exerted himself so much in the two first acts, that in the third he became so hoarse, that he was upon the point of giving up the remainder of the part for want of powers; when a gentleman present, behind the scenes, having luckily a Seville orange in his pocket, entreated him to use it, and it fortunately so sufficiently restored his voice, as to enable him to go through the part with uncommon applause: and, probably, had it not been owing to this trifling incident, we might have been deprived of the greatest ornament, the British, or perhaps, any other stage ever acquired.

No sooner was his fame known at the west end of the town, than the other theatres were deserted, and Goodman's-fields attracted the politest audiences. From this time Mr. Garrick's reputation, as an actor was established. "Like the sun bursting from behind a cloud, he displayed in the earliest dawn, more than a meridian brightness."

Having

Having established his fame in London, he repaired to Dublin, and there acquired fresh laurels, which he imported with him soon after into England, and was now pronounced by the united suffrages of the dramatic critics, to be at the zenith of his profession.

He soon became a dramatic writer, and was chiefly successful in all his productions.——He married Signora Violetta, this lady was a dancer upon Drury-lane stage about the year 1746. On this marriage Lady Burlington presented her with a casket of jewels, containing also, 10, 000l. in bank notes.

A disorder, with which he had been afflicted for many years, and which was one cause of his quitting the stage, at length proved fatal to him. Being on a visit at Lord Spencer's, he was suddenly seized with a fit of the stone, which rendered him incapable of remaining any longer in company, and being conveyed home to his house in the Adelphi, his disorder increasing upon him, it put an end to his vital existence on the 30th of January, 1779, in the 63d year of his age; His genius is immortal, and can never die!

Mr. Garrick is said to have died worth upwards of 100, 000l. Lord Camden, Mr. Rigby, Mr. Wallis, and Mr. Patterson, were the four executors to his last will. He left his seat at Hampton, and his town house to his widow, with other ample provision, and after a variety of subordinate legacies to his nephews, nieces, &c. he bequeathed the residue of his fortune to be equally divided among his brothers Peter and George Garrick, Esqrs. and his sister Mrs. Doxey, his three heirs at law.

The Dean and Chapter of Westminster granted leave to bury Mr. Garrick in the Abbey, and to erect a monument to him in the Cloisters.

The following is a copy of a Love-Letter to David Garrick, Esq. written soon after his arrival in England.

To David Garrick, Esq. at Hampton in Middlesex.

Dear Davy, Sept. 3. 1765.

Permit me to take this first opportunity of congratulating you on your safe arrival in England. If an absence of two years has not entirely obliterated the memory of an *old acquaintance*, I flatter myself you will not be sorry to hear from me: I am sure, with regard to myself, my affection for you is not in the least diminished; and I have too high an opinion of your honor and integrity, to suspect you of an intrigue with *foreigners*. My fond and sincere attachment to you is too well known to all the world ever to be called in question; and I believe I may say, which is more than most mistresses in this age can boast of, that when you *left*, you were rather richer than when you *found* me; and though some malicious creatures have been ill-natured enough to give out, that your health is impaired by your connections with me; and that you are almost worn out in my service, I hope to convince them very soon that you are as good a *man* as ever. I have been much out of order ever since you went, and some people think I am terribly *fallen away*. Nobody, you know, looks equally well at all times; for the generality, in my own

own opinion, I am not much *thinner* than when you were with me: your friends have indeed been very kind, and done all in their power to keep up my spirits in your absence: Dr. P——l and Dr. H——d among the rest have been of great service to me. Little C——n most obligingly visited me, when I was apparently in a *decline*, and sent his own apothecary Mr. King (and an excellent one he is) to my assistance. But you, and you only, my dear Davy, are my truest best support; without *you*, I am not agreeable either to myself or others; to you I am indebted for all my power of pleasing, and if you do not return to these longing arms, I am resolved, as much as I love a crowd, to shut myself up; and see no *company* at all, which, by the bye, as you very well know, would give the greatest pleasure imaginable to my sister, who hates I should see any body. You cannot conceive how many *airs* she has given herself since you have been abroad, and how proud she is grown of her *fine voice*; perhaps I may yet see time when mine may be liked as well as her's. The ill-natured world reports, that you have quite forsaken and will have no more to do with me; but I am as much above their malice, as you, I doubt not, are above such falsehood and ingratitude. In spite of all their malicious surmises, I shall hope to see you in October or November next; and if you will promise to come, I am sure I can prevail on two or three friends to give you the meeting. I am not certain whether the greatest personage (in all res-

pects) in the kingdom will not be of the party; but this is *entre nous*. In the mean while I am

Your's most sincerely,

And most affectionately,

D. L. P.

P. S. My cloaths are some of them worn out and others a little dirty; beg therefore you will order me a new gown for the winter.

Mr. James Quin was born in the parish of St. Paul's, Covent-garden, London, in the year 1693. Various are the reports of his family. Some have averred, that his father was an American, and that James was the illegitimate issue of a criminal correspondence, which his father kept up in Ireland, upon his return from the western hemisphere, and that on this account he was deprived of his patrimonial expectations. This imaginary lineage was never allowed by Quin himself: on the contrary, he always asserted that his father was an English gentleman, who, some years after his son's birth, settled in Ireland, and was possessed of a small fortune, which his natural generosity and benificence greatly incumbered. Victor gives the following anecdote of his family: "His mother was a reputed widow, who had been married to a person in the mercantile way, and who left her in Ireland to pursue some traffick, or particular business in the West Indies.—He had been absent from her near seven years, without having received any letter, or the least information about him. He was given out to be dead, which report was universally credited; she went into mourning for him; and some time after a gentleman whose name was Quin, who

who had an estate of a thousand pounds a year, paid his addresses to her, and married her. She bore him a son—and no couple appeared more happy; but in the midst of their happiness the first husband returned—claimed his wife, and had her. Mr. Quin retired with his son, and at his death left him his estate: but the heir at law, hearing the story of our hero, soon recovered the estate, and left young Quin to shift for himself, in what manner his wit and genius would suggest to him; he soon took to the stage, where he got both *fame* and *fortune*; and counterbalanced, by his talents, the untoward accidents of his birth."

Mr. Quin made his first appearance at Drury-lane, in the year 1718. At that time of day, seniority of date was considered with as much jealousy in the Green-room, as in the army or navy; and an actor that should at once have rushed upon the town, with all the powers of a Betterton or a Booth, in a capital character, would have been looked upon by his competitors for fame as little better than a usurper of talents and applause. Besides, the manager considered acting as a mere mechanical acquisition, that nothing but time could procure: and therefore, every one in his company was to serve his apprenticeship before he attempted being even a journeyman actor. This accounts for Quin's remaining for a long time the mere scene drudge, the faggot of the drama. He, at length, however, performed some capital parts, and his name made its appearance in the bills, (though not in CAPITALS) annexed to *Banquo* in *Macbeth*, and the *Lieutenant of the Tower* in *Richard the Third*.

It was not till the year 1720, that he had an opportunity of displaying his great theatrical powers. Upon the revival of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, at Lincoln's-inn-fields, of which Mr. Rich, was then manager, there was no one in the whole company who would undertake the part of *Falstaff*; Rich was therefore inclined to give up all thoughts of representing it, when Quin happening to come in his way, said, if he pleased, he would attempt it.—"Hem!" said Rich, taking a pinch of snuff —"you attempt *Falstaff!*—why (hem!) you might as well think of acting *Cato* after Booth. The character of *Falstaff*, young man, is quite another character from what you think;" taking another pinch of snuff "it is not a little snivelling part, that that—in short that any one can do.—There is not a man among you that has any idea of the part but myself. It is quite out of your walk. No, never think of *Falstaff*—never think of *Falstaff*—it is quite—quite out of your walk, indeed, young man."

This was the reception his first effort of stepping out of the faggot walk met with, and for some days he laid aside all thoughts of ever doing *Falstaff*, or indeed speaking upon the stage, except it were to deliver a message. Ryan, who at that time had the ear and confidence of Rich, having heard Quin long before he thought of coming on the stage, repeat some passages in the character of *Falstaff*, prevailed upon the manager to let Quin rehearse them before him; which he accordingly did, but not much to his master's satisfaction. However, as the case was desperate, and either the *Merry Wives*

Wives of Windsor must have been laid aside, or Quin perform *Falstaff*; this alternative, at length prevailed upon Rich to admit James into this part.

The first night of his appearance in this character, he surprised and astonished the audience: no actor before ever entered into the spirit of the author, and it seemed as if Shakespeare had by intuition drawn the knight so long before for Quin only to represent. The just applause he met with upon this occasion is incredible: continued clapping, and peals of laughter, in some measure interrupted the representation; though it was impossible that any regularity whatever could have more encreased the mirth, or excited the approbation of the audience.

When Quin first engaged at Drury-lane, he succeeded the elder Mills in all the capital parts of tragedy; and Delane supplied his place at Lincoln's-inn-fields, after having performed for some time with tolerable success at Goodman's-fields. But it was upon Booth's quitting the stage, on account of his illness, that Quin shone forth in all his splendor; and yet he had the diffidence upon the first night of his appearing in *Cato*, to insert in the bills, that *the part of Cato would be attempted by* Mr. Quin. The modesty of this invitation produced a full house, and a favourable audience, but the actor's own peculiar merit effected more. When he came to that part of the play where his dead son is brought in upon the bier, Quin in speaking these words,

"Thanks to the gods! my boy has done his duty."

so affected the whole house, that they cried out with a continued acclamation, "Booth outdone! Booth outdone!

At the end of the winter of the year 1748, Quin having taken umbrage at Rich's behaviour, retired in a fit of spleen and resentment to Bath, notwithstanding his being under engagements to that manager. Though Rich ought to have known that Quin never put up with any insult, and though he too late repented of what he had done, yet he thought by treating him with silent contempt to make him submit to his own terms. On the other hand, Quin, whose generous heart began now to relent having used his old acquaintance so cavalierly, resolved to sacrifice his resentment to his friendship, and wrote early the next season a laconic epistle to Rich in these words:

"I am at Bath. *Quin.*"

Rich thought this by no means a sufficient apology for his behaviour, and returned an answer, in almost as laconic, though not quite so civil a manner:

"Stay there, and be damned. *Rich.*"

This reply cost the public one of the greatest ornaments of the stage; for as he and Mr. Garrick did not agree very well together, whilst they continued rival actors, he could not brook submitting to his competitor in dramatic fame; and as he now took a firm resolution of never engaging with, "so insolent a blockhead," as he stiled Rich for this answer, there was no theatrical door open for him, without he had turned opera singer. He nevertheless

came

came from Bath in the year 1749, to play the part of *Othello* at Covent-garden theatre, for the benefit of the unhappy sufferers by the fire in Cornhill, which happened on the 25th of March, in the year 1748: and he afterwards continued many successive years to come constantly to London, to perform the character of *Sir John Falstaff*, for his old and trusty friend Ryan; but in the year 1754, having lost two of his front teeth, he was compelled to decline the task, and wrote a comic epistle to Ryan upon this occasion.

"My dear Friend,

There is no person on earth, whom I would sooner serve than Ryan—but, by God, I will whistle Falstaff for no man."

From the time that Quin retired from the stage, a good harmony subsisted, and a regular correspondence was carried on between Mr. Garrick and him; and when he paid a visit to his friends in the metropolis once a year, as he generally did in autumn, he as constantly passed a week or two at Mr. Garrick's villa at Hampton. His last excursion thither in the summer of 1765, was productive of the most agreeable sallies of wit and merriment. Mr. Garrick's travels furnished such new and entertaining topics of discourse, and Mr. Quin's remarks such unexpected strokes of fancy, as enlivened the conversation to a degree that is almost incredible.

During the stay he made at Hampton, he had an eruption on his hand, which the faculty were of opinion would turn to a mortification; and this intimation greatly damped his spirits, as the thought of

of losing a limb appeared to him more terrible than death itself; he therefore resolved, let what might be the consequence, not to suffer an amputation. Whether this dreadful perspective so violently affected his spirits as to throw him into a hyponchrondria, or whether the natural bad habit of his body brought on a fever, this much is certain, that one of the malignant kind succeeded; and when he was out of all danger with respect to his hand, he was carried off by this fatal disorder.

During his illness he had taken such large quantities of bark. as to occasion an incessant drought, which nothing could assuage; and being willing to live as long as he could without pain, he discontinued taking any medicines for upwards of a week before his death, and during this period he was in very good spirits. The day before he died he drank a bottle of claret, and being sensible of his approaching end, he said. "He could wish that the last tragic scene were over, though he was in hopes he should be able to go through it with becoming dignity." He was not mistaken, and departed this life on Tuesday the 21st of January, 1766, about four o'clock in the morning, in the seventy-third year of his age.

The celebrated MRS. YATES's first theatrical attempt was in Ireland, under the elder Mr. Sheridan; but, not cultivating his favor, her abilities were prevented from acquiring that lustre to which they were entitled; and she quitted that kingdom, procuring a trifling situation at one of the London theatres, where her talents remained some time in total obscurity, till the accidental illness of Mrs. Cibber

Cibber gave her an opportunity of appearing in a character of eminence, in which she discovered such excellence, that the manager thought her deserving of protection and advancement.

As soon as the track was opened for the unrestricted exertion of her powers, her great merit became evident, and she reached the proudest heights of her profession with a success that enabled her to accumulate a very large fortune, which, with a prudence rather unusual in her profession, she secured, to provide against the caprices of public taste, and alleviate the cares of declining life.

She died May the 2d, 1787, at her house at Pimlico, and her husband survived her nine years.

MR. WOODWARD was born the 2d of October, 1714, and came upon the stage about the year 1738. Although he made his first public appearance in pantomime, in the character of *Harlequin*, he soon displayed theatrical talents of a superior kind; he became one of our best comedians, and remained unrivalled in many characters, such as *Captain Bobadil*, *Marplot*, *Mercutio*, *&c.* It is true, he was a mannerist, but being constantly perfect in his parts, and entering into the true spirit of his author, he was always a pleasing, and, in his capital parts, the most superior actor upon the stage.

Being a prudent, economical man, he saved a considerable sum of money, which he bequeathed to Mrs. Bellamy, as a testimonial of his great regard for her. To many of his old acquaintance he left tokens of his friendship, particularly a ring to Mr. Garrick, with whom he had lived near thirty-

seven

seven years upon the most cordial terms; this gentleman entertaining a great esteem for Mr. Woodward. He died in 1777.

Having mentioned Woodward, we are of course led to make some remarks on MRS. BELLAMY, who was once the topic of public conversation. This lady's mother was the daughter of an eminent farmer in Kent, whose name was Seal. He was one of the people called Quakers, and dying young and intestate, the whole of his effects fell into the hands of his widow, who married a second husband of the name of Busby; a man of supposed property, but, in fact, so involved in debt, that Mrs. Busby, not having taken the necessary precautions to secure a maintenance for herself and daughter, was left destitute of support. She therefore accepted of the offer of Mrs. Godfrey, sister to the Duke of Marlborough, to take her daughter under her protection. By her she was placed at a boarding-school in Queen-square with her own daughter. Here she attracted the notice of Lord Tyrawley, and being young and inexperienced, more under the influence of the flesh than the spirit, she eloped from school, and leaving the protection of her kind patroness, sought for happiness in the arms of her lover. Her noble admirer, however, proving false, they parted, and she went on the stage in Ireland, where she continued for several years, till on some disagreement between her and the proprietors, she left that kingdom, and formed the strange resolution of following Lord Tyrawley to Lisbon. She was received by him with open arms; but having prior

to

to her arrival formed a connexion with a lady of that country, and not caring to inform Miss Seal of it, he placed her in the family of an English merchant. In this family she became acquainted with Capt. Bellamy, who having in vain solicited her to accept his hand, informed her of his Lordship's connexion. Rage and resentment supplied the place of affection, and she immediately married Mr. Bellamy, and set sail with him to Ireland.

In a few months after the arrival of the Captain and his new-married lady at the place of their destination, to the inexpressible astonishment and dissatisfaction of the former. Mrs. Bellamy made her appearance on this habitable globe on St. George's Day, 1733, some months too soon for Capt. Bellamy to claim any degree of consanguinity with her. Her birth, however, so exasperated him, that he left the kingdom, and never saw or corresponded with her mother afterwards.

Lord Tyrawley, though greatly displeased at Miss Seal's sudden departure from Lisbon, nevertheless wrote to a friend in Ireland to request, if she proved pregnant in time, to consider the child as his, and to take care of it as soon as born, without, if possible, suffering the mother to see it. Agreeable to these instructions our heroine was put to nurse till she was two years old; and at the age of four, was placed in a convent at Boulogne for her education, where she continued till she attained her eleventh year. On her arrival at Dover she was met by a person who had been a domestic of his Lordship's, but now lived in St. James's-street, and with whom she was to reside till his Lordship's

return from Portugal, which was daily expected. On his arrival he received her in the tenderest manner, and soon took her to a little box which he had hired in Bushy-park. Here she was introduced to my Lord's company, which consisted chiefly of the witty and the gay, and soon became the object of admiration. My Lord soon after being appointed Ambassador to Russia, she was left under the care of a lady of quality, with an express prohibition against seeing her mother, with an annual allowance of 100l. Allured by this bait, her mother, who had married again, and whose husband, after stripping her, had left her, prevailed upon her to quit her protectress and come to live with her.

In consequence of this, her allowance was not only stopped, but she was totally abandoned by Lord Tyrawley. Soon after Mr. Rich of Covent-garden theatre, having by accident heard her repeat some passages in *Othello*, engaged her as a performer at that theatre. At the time of entering into the agreement she was only fourteen; "Of a figure" we adopt her own words "not inelegant; a powerful voice, light as the gossamer; of inexhaustable spirits, and possessed of some humor." *Monimia* was fixed on for her first appearance, much against the opinion of Mr. Quin, who, after a smart altercation with Mr. Rich on the subject, told her in his usual way, "Child, I would advise you to play *Serina*, before you think of playing *Monimia*." To which she pertly replied, "If I did, Sir, I should never live to play the *Orphan*."

Notwithstanding this opposition, Mr. Rich persevered in his opinion. But when the curtain drew up,

up, her spirits failed her; and notwithstanding the repeated plaudits she received, she stood for some time like a statue, deprived both of memory and voice. The curtain was dropt, till she could recover herself. She appeared again; but neither the persuasion of the manager nor the encouragement of the audience could rouse her from her stupidity till the fourth act, when, to the astonishment of the audience, the surprise of the performers, and the exultation of the manager, she felt herself suddenly inspired, and acquitted herself throughout the whole of this most difficult part of the character with the greatest eclat. Even Quin was so fascinated (as he expressed himself), that when she came off, he caught her from the ground in a transport, and exclaimed aloud, "Thou art a divine creature, and the true spirit is in thee;" and from that instant became her zealous friend; gave her a general invitation to the suppers he usually gave four times a-week; and having enquired her mother's character and circumstances, enclosed a bank bill in a blank cover, and sent it her by the Penny-post.

In this public situation she unavoidably had many professed admirers, among whom Lord Byron and Mr. Metham stood foremost; but, as she would not listen to any but honourable proposals and a coach, Mr. Metham honestly told her, he could not comply with the first, as he depended on his father, whose consent he could not hope to obtain; and as for the latter, he could not afford it. Lord Byron, whose vanity was hurt at her rejecting him, contrived a plan to be revenged; in consequence of which the Earl of——, a friend of his

Lordship's, one Sunday evening, called to inform her that a Miss B——, an intimate of her's, was in a coach at the bottom of Southampton-street, and wished to speak to her, when, on her going to the coach door, she was suddenly hoisted into it by his Lordship and carried off by force. From this Platonic Peer our fair Proserpine escaped unaccountably by the sudden appartion of her brother, and was safely lodged at her own mantua-maker's in Broad-street. From hence she wrote to her mother, who, on the supposition of her having been consenting to the elopement, returned her letters unopened. Thus abandoned by her mother, and too much depressed by the public scandal to attempt a re-instatement in the theatrical line, the anguish of her mind brought on a fever, which had nearly proved fatal, but which her youth and constitution at length got the better of. On her recovery, she went on a visit to some of her relations at Braintree, where she was considered as one of the elect, and but for an unlucky discovery by the famous Zachary Moore, might have become a chosen vessel, but by this means was again exposed to be buffeted by Satan. After this romantic adventure she was restored to her mother's favor, returned to town, and engaged with Mr. Sheridan in 1745, who was then in London raising theatrical recruits. On her arrival in Dublin, in consequence of her being acknowledged by Mrs. O'Hara, Lord Tyrawley's sister, as her niece, she was patronised by several ladies of distinction. In Ireland she continued for two seasons, and became acquainted with a Mr. Crump, on whose

whose account she suffered much persecution at a future period. On her return to England she renewed her acquaintance with Quin, and her engagement at Covent-garden in 1748, where she was again disturbed by Lord Byron and a Mr. Bullock. She now made her first appearance in comedy, in the character of *Lady Froth* in the *Double Dealer*. One evening, after playing *Alicia*, Mr. Quin introduced her to Lord Tyrawley in the Scene-room, when a perfect reconciliation took place between them. About this time she gave way to that predilection which from her first knowledge of him she had entertained for Mr. afterwards Sir George Metham, whom, she now considered as her future husband. My Lord Tyrawley, having joined his interest to her mother's in favor of Mr. Crump, who wished to marry her, and having one day peremptorily insisted on her compliance, this hastened a measure to which she was not very averse; and the same evening, in the beginning of the fifth act of the *Provoked Wife*, in which she played *Lady Fanciful*, Mr Metham carried her off from behind the scenes, and left Mr. Quin to apologize to the audience. With Mr. Metham she retired to York, where she remained till she was delivered of a son. In consequence of an offer the ensuing season of an engagement, she at Mr. Metham's persuasion, much against her own inclination, returned to town, where she was received by the public with their usual indulgence Sept. 1750. The connexion between her and Mr. Metham continued uninterrupted for some years, till at length the demon of jealousy having got possession of his mind,

he behaved, at an entertainment given by her in commemoration of his birth-day, so outrageously before the whole company, that a quarrel, and, in consequence of a rash vow, separation ensued.

Mr. Calcraft, who was one of the party, artfully contrived to widen the breach, and by a series of manœvres prevailed on her (by the interposition of a Mr. Gansell, at whose house she was on a visit, and who was the dupe of Mr. Calcraft's art), after a variety of struggles, to consent to live with him, under a promise of his marrying her in the course of six or seven years, though he was at that time married. Soon after she discovered the artifices that had been employed to induce her to take this step, and in consequence of it Mr. Calcraft, to whom she never was much attached, became so disagreeable to her, that though they continued under the same roof, they lived very unhappily. Mr. Calcraft's parsimony, to call it by no harsher name, ill suited her unbounded generosity, which more than bordered on extravagance, and did not contribute to reconcile differences. His meanness (which, if the picture be not much too highly colored, was in the extreme) produced in her a settled contempt, which terminated, after being together about eight years, in a final separation. During this period Mrs. Bellamy had two children by him; and though she was almost constantly engaged, and her emoluments at the theatre were very considerable, she at the time of their parting was deeply involved, notwithstanding Mr. Calcraft's repeated promises to liquidate all her debts, in consequence of which she gave up her jewels to the amount of six thousand pounds.

After

After her separation from Mr. Calcraft, she formed a connexion with Mr. Digges in Ireland, who being as much embarrassed as herself, she experienced a variety of distress in the two years she lived with him, at the expiration of which they parted, owing to a former wife's resurrection. After this we find her again engaged in England 1767, but perpetually in difficulties, till at length she was obliged to apply to Count Haslang, the Bavarian Ambassador for his protection, which he politely and readily granted; notwithstanding which she was arrested at the suit of a Mrs. Ray, and obliged to take up her residence for some time in St. George's-fields. After she had recovered her liberty, she lived with Mr. Woodward till his decease, who, as before observed, left the chief of his property in trust to his executors, to purchase an annuity for her during her life. From this bequest, whether owing to the chicanery of an attorney, or what other cause we know not, she reaped little or no benefit, and was at length, after an accumulation of misery, reduced to the dreadful determination of putting a period to her misfortunes and existence together 1780. From the execution of this rash resolution she was prevented by a fortuitous circumstance.

Few people met with more vicissitudes in life than Mrs. Bellamy, or greater instances of ingratitude: a kind of fatality seems to have pursued her, which may, however, without ill nature, frequently be found to have originated in her own imprudence. She died Feb. 16, 1788.

Mrs. Yates and she had a violent paper war, notwithstanding which, the former after she had retired

retired from the stage, performed for the benefit of this Unfortunate.

Tom Weston was the son of Thomas Weston, Esq. first cook to his majesty King George the third, the salary and emoluments of which place were fully sufficient to enable him to live as a gentleman, and give his son an education, wherein he was instructed in all the polite accomplishments. When he grew up to about sixteen years of age, he seemed to have a particular liking to the stage, at the representations of which he was very often present: by frequenting the houses where the actors usually resort to, he soon became acquainted with several of them and also with a number of young spouters.

His father had not, as yet, observed any thing in his son's behaviour to give him cause to suspect his obedience; he therefore procured for him the place of Turnbroach (turnspit in English) in the king's kitchen, worth about thirty pounds a year: it is executed by a deputy, who is paid about seven or eight pounds a year, and which place our hero possessed till his death. He got also appointed a clerk under the clerk of the kitchen, and Tom made a jaunt in the yacht with the late king to Holland, in his way to Hanover, as part of his household. On his return his father procured a recommendation for him to Sir John Bentley, who just at that time was appointed to the command of the Warspite, a fine 74 gun ship, just launched at Deptford, and then rigging and fitting out for sea; and Tom was accordingly accepted as a midshipman:

when

when the ship got into Long-reach, he began to be tired of his new occupation, and sigh for his old acquaintance and the spouting-clubs; a thousand schemes he thought of to get out of the ship, and at last effected his escape. Not venturing to return home to his father, after some distress, he thought upon the stage as the most eligible means of subsistance. Accordingly he experienced all the ups and downs of a strolling life. By means of a friend he was engaged at Foote's in the Haymarket, but in a very low cast of playing; for even at the coming out of the *Minor*, in the year 1760, he only played *Dick*: he now met with an agreeable young lady, a miliner in the Haymarket, whom he courted and married, but by whom he never had any children; she appeared at Foote's theatre in *Lucy*, in the *Minor*, and promised with care, to make a tolerable actress. Weston soon stamped his fame at the Haymarket by his performance of *Jerry Sneak*; he then got an engagement at Drury-lane, where he played during Mr. Garrick's absence in Italy, *Abel Drugger*, and it is said, excelled every one in that part. Being always in debt, he was for ever in terror of bailiffs, and so much addicted to liquor, that by frequent intoxication he at last destroyed his inside. He died Jan. 18, 1776.

To mention Mr. Weston as an excellent comedian, would be paying him but a trifling compliment: we must consider him something farther. Untutored, either at school or by a taste for literature, he rushed upon the world as an unlettered mechanic, and evinced himself a real son of Thalia.

As to his dress and appearance, they united ate

once

once the fop and the sloven; a tawdry laced coat would be accompanied by a dirty shirt, and a Macaroni waistcoat with greasy breeches. His physiognomy was happily calculated for the stage, having that necessary vacuity of expression, which his walk of parts so immediately required. His natural countenance and complexion were truly picturesque of the company he kept. He was the genuine representative of a night-cellar; and, as was said of a certain lady, who shone in a similar walk upon the stage, "She breathed gin at every pore."

NED SHUTER, another celebrated comedian, cannot boast of any great descent, as it is generally believed that his father was a chairman, and plied in the purlieus of Covent-garden. It cannot, therefore, be imagined that his education was of that kind as to entitle him to move in any elevated sphere in life. It is, indeed, asserted that when he was of a proper age, instead of being sent to school for improvement, he was hired as an alehouse boy to fetch in pots, and such other low vocations. But this circumstance seems doubtful, as we find him, when very young, put apprentice to Mr. Chapman, the actor, who employed him as a marker at his billiard tables, which were kept in Bow-street. Nevertheless, Mr. Chapman put him to school, and finding in him a rising genius for the stage, had him taught to dance under Mons. D'Estrades, who then belonged to Covent-garden theatre. Upon the death of Mr. Chapman, Mr. Macklin took him, and from whom Shuter received very considerable instruction, to form the actor. When

he

he had attained the age of maturity he applied to Mr. Rich, then patentee of Covent-garden theatre, who discovering in him many traits of dramatic humour, engaged him at a low rate: but soon becoming the favorite of the town in his peculiar walk, in which no one ever equalled him, his salary was greatly encreased, and he became an actor of consequence. From this period his company was incessantly sought for by the choice spirits of the age, and having himself a natural turn for mirth and pleasantry, he often yielded to their entreaties, whose vigils often interrupted that time which he should have devoted to theatrical study. Hence it was that he became frequently very erroneous in his part, which induced him often to supply it by some extempore stroke of humour, which, though it gained him the applause of the galleries, brought upon him the censure of the judicious, and he repeatedly received severe reprimands in the papers upon this account. But as Shuter seemed only to aim at popularity and characteristic humour, without being the chaste actor, these censurer had little or no effect, and instead of losing any part of his reputation from these defects, he seemed daily to gain upon the approbation of the town, and at length in *Justice Midas* gained the summit of his excellence.

Shuter was now the peculiar favorite of the town, with a salary of twelve pounds a week, and certain of a crowded and overflowing benefit. With such an income we should imagine, that he might not only have lived in a very genteel manner, but in a few years secured an easy independency

dency. It must be owned that for some time he was tolerably frugal, and had laid by a sum amounting to a few hundreds, which he had placed in the funds. But unfortunately an itch for play prevailed, and several successive runs of ill-luck compelled him to sell out. Add to this an unlucky connection with Nancy Dawson, plunged him into deeper distress, and even obliged him to create debts which greatly embarrassed him. He was now an incessant dupe to those leeches of society called bailiffs, who had him as their constant customer; and their *douçeurs* alone for what is called civility money, would have ruined almost any other actor upon the stage. Add to this that Miss Dawson's cravings were not small; her avarice was unlimited, and one of her greatest boasts was having ruined a number of generous fellows.

The following anecdote may be depended upon. Shuter and Nancy went out upon a party of pleasure with a third person, in the Easter holidays. The fore part of the day passed with great pleasantry and good humour—the fineness of the day, and the excelleuce of the cheer did not a little contribute towards their chearfulness. However, after dinner, the glass circulating pretty freely, to which Nancy had not the least aversion, the champaigne began to operate, and as she was very quarrelsome in her cups, she abused Ned in the grossest manner; he retaliated upon her with his usual humour and repartee, when being at coffee, she was so irritated that she could not put him out of temper, that she poured a whole pot full of scalding coffee upon his legs; Shuter had the day before broke

one

one of his shins, which rendered his torture so great, that in the violence of his rage, he knocked her down; she screamed out, and presently a party of holiday folks broke in from the next room, and seeing Nancy lie sprawling upon the floor, with the blood issuing from her nose and mouth, they were going to throw Shuter out of the window, which was two pair of stairs high, for his unmanly behaviour to a woman. But being informed of the real state of the case from Ned's friend, they changed sides, damned her, and left the room.—Shuter and his friend returned to town without her, and it was some days before a reconciliation took place: but his infatuation was so great for this woman, that he could not withstand a tender billet from her, in which she acknowledged her fault. Jealousy, however, performed what the greatest ill treatment could not affect: he had for some time suspected one Mr. Ireland, a limner by profession, to be too much in Nancy's good graces, and having positive proof of her infidelity, he had fortitude to leave her entirely to his rival.

His affairs daily grew worse, and his creditors more clamorous: notwithstanding, he could not resist the charms of Poll K——y, who lived in Russel-street, Bloomsbury. This might be stiled according to the vulgar phrase, "being out of the frying pan into the fire." Poll was famous for fleecing her gallants to the utmost, and not only to glean all she could for herself, but put them to the utmost expence in her power; which the Buffalo's Head, in Bloomsbury-square, can testify, where they passed many vigils, to the no small

detriment of poor Ned's finances, whilst Poll laughed in her sleeve at him for his folly, calling him her best cake.

In such a hopeful situation, and with such a connection, our readers must imagine that Ned's ruin was inevitable. He too late saw his impending fate, which drove him almost to despair, and the only relief left him was the bottle. It was his misfortune when inebriated to be almost deprived of reason, which led him into many situations, that otherwise he would never have been found in.

Hence we may in a great measure account for his very eccentric pursuits amongst the lowest company, even in St. Giles's, where he has been known more than once to treat a dozen or more of the rabble with drams and strong beer. His sober excuse for such absurdities was, that in his dramatic walk it was necessary that he should know life from the prince to the beggar, in order to represent either from nature, as occasion might require.

His extravagance and dissipation having greatly involved him in debt, he found himself under the necessity, to avoid a prison, of appropriating the greater part of his salary to the use of his creditors, The consequence of which was, that not having a sufficiency to live as he formerly had done, he created fresh debts, which induced him to take the benefit of the act of insolvency preceding the last.

It might be imagined that now being clear of the world, and in full possession of his salary, he would have had no occasion to call in Bacchus to aid his spirits and drive away melancholy. But he had contracted such a habit of drinking, that he could

could not shake it off, he frequently made his appearance at the theatre in a state of intoxication, when he was to perform some capital part; the consequence was the rest of the performers were confused, and the audience went away greatly displeased. The managers remonstrated, and he parried the remonstrance with some stroke of humour. At length, however, being engaged in the summer at Liverpool, he was seized with a violent complaint, which disqualified him from playing any more that season.

Upon his return to town he was still engaged at Covent-garden theatre at his usual salary; but his abilities were so greatly impaired, that the managers were compelled to engage Mr. Wilson, who had performed with applause at the theatre in the Haymarket, to fill Mr. Shuter's parts. This circumstance greatly chagrined him, as he acknowledged to some of his intimate acquaintance, and probably drove him to greater irregularities than he would otherwise have been guilty of. He now frequently appeared behind the scenes in a state of complete inebriation, or rather insensibility, in despite of all his friends could say to dissuade him from it. He was accordingly laid upon the shelf for the remainder of the season. The managers, nevertheless, generously granted him a benefit, which proved a very advantageous one.

As he found there was little probability of his being reinstated in Covent-garden theatre, he was resolved to make the most of the remains of his faculties, and engaged at the little theatre at China Hall, Rotherhithe, where he performed several

nights, and where his name brought many good houses.

At the close of Mr. Foote's season in 1776, he performed at a stipulated price for the benefit of several of the performers. A benefit under his name, though it was in fact that of another actor, brought a prodigious house. This, was the last time of his appearing upon any stage when he too clearly evinced that all his scenic abilities had subsided, and that nothing but a mere *caput mortuum* of himself remained.

A very short time after he was seized in a very violent manner; kept his bed for several weeks, and was pronounced past recovery. The managers of Covent-garden theatre behaved upon this occasion with great humanity; they allowed him a sufficiency, that he might not any way be in want; but all their assistance was of no avail. He died November 1, 1776, in the 49th year of his age.

To sum up Shuter's character in a few words, it may be said he was no man's enemy but his own. But an uncommon lust for being thought a humourist and a *bon vivant* frequently hurried him into such dissipations, as prevented his attending properly to his business. His fondness for play, which may be ascribed to his early initiation at Chapman's, and his extravagant fondness for some of the most artful Thais's this metropolis ever produced, drained his pocket, and at length brought him to a jail. He, however, had some good qualities that should not be overlooked. He was generous, perhaps to a fault, friendly, and charitable.

Mr. Henderson was born at London in 1747. His father was an Irish factor of great probity, then resident in Goldsmith-street. His family was originally Scotch, settled at Fordell, in the north of Scotland; and he was descended in a right line from the famous Dr. Alexander Henderson, who defended the Presbyterean church government, in a conference, at the Isle of Wight, with King Charles the first.

In the year 1749, Mrs. Henderson removed to Newport Pagnell, in Buckinghamshire, where, for a period of near ten years, she endeavoured to discharge all the duties incumbent upon her, with a maternal solicitude, which she had the happiness in the sequel, to see repaid by the most exemplary proofs of filial piety and affection. At the age of thirteen she sent this son to a boarding-school, then kept by Dr. Stirling, at Hemel Hempstead, in Hertfordshire, where he remained little more than a year.

In his early youth, Mr. Henderson discovered a genius for drawing that was not neglected; for, on his leaving Hemel Hempstead, he was sent to London, and placed under the care of Mr. Fournier, an eminent master in that art, but of a character so remarkably capricious, that it was impossible for such a pupil to stay long with him. He was next invited to the house of Mr. Cripp, a very eminent silversmith in St. James's street. This gentleman, who was a near relation to him, intended to employ him in drawing designs for his own profession, but his death put a period to this scheme.

When Mr. Henderson was very young, his mother put a volume of Shakespeare into his hands, and it was the constant perusal of that immortal bard that first inspired him with his passion for the stage. The characters which he so much admired in the closet, he was convinced he could act with judgment and propriety. But his establishment on a London theatre met with obstacles, that required no small degree of patience and perseverance to overcome. It was about the year 1768 that he made his first application of this kind to Mr. George Garrick, who, on hearing him rehearse, declared it to be his opinion, that Mr. Henderson's voice could not possibly convey articulate sounds to the audience of any theatre; and indeed, at that time, there might be some justice in the observation; for Mr. Henderson's friends were then apprehensive of his falling into a consumptive habit.

In a few years, however, he recovered his health and spirits, and still retaining his passion for acting, he was introduced by Mr. Becket, the bookseller, to Mr. Garrick; but notwithstanding the closest attendance on that gentleman, he could make no progress in his favorite views. He was sometimes neglected, and sometimes noticed, as accident or caprice dictated.

Tired with paying daily, though fruitless homage to Mr. Garrick, he now made application to the late Mr. Colman, the then acting manager of Covent-garden theatre; but that gentleman did not even condescend to hear him, and dismissed him rather abruptly. Mr. Garrick, however, after two years close attendance, at length consented to grant

grant our young candidate a day of audience, and he heard him rehearse several scenes in a variety of characters. His opinion was not more propitious to Mr. Henderson's views, than that of his brother had been before. "His voice," he said, "was not sufficiently melodious or clear, nor his pronunciation articulate enough. He had in his mouth too much wool or worsted, which he must absolutely get rid of before he could be fit for the theatre in Drury-lane."—But not to discourage him entirely, he furnished him with a letter to Mr. Palmer, the manager of the Bath company, who engaged him at a salary of one guinea per week.

Mr. Garrick's recommendation, it is certain, greatly influenced the reception which Mr. Henderson met with from the dramatic critics at Bath. On his arrival in that city, he assumed the name of Courtney, and his first appearance was on the 6th of October, 1772, in the character of *Hamlet*. The house was crowded by an audience impatient with expectation, who conveyed their applause in the loudest acclamations. On his appearance his apprehensions were so great, that he could scarcely be heard, but the generous indulgence of the audience soon inspired him with courage.

Mr. Palmer, who found his account in frequently employing so valuable an acquisition, gave him a great variety of characters; and he became so great a favorite, that he soon acquired the title of the Bath Roscius. When he found his reputation established, he resumed his real name, and spoke an address to the town on the occasion on the 22d of December.

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From the period of his going to Bath, Mr. Henderson frequently corresponded with Mr. Garrick, who, in one of his letters, instructed him not to be elated with success, but to be cautious of his company, and to avoid the rocks against which many other actors had split, by mis-spending their time, and acquiring a habit of idleness and drinking among the vain pretenders to theatrical merit. He likewise advised him to peruse other books besides plays, and to acquire such farther knowledge as might add to his importance in life. Though a disagreement afterwards arose between them, Mr. Henderson always spoke of this letter with gratitude. He adopted the scheme of life pointed out by Mr. Garrick, and steadily persevered in it.

At the close of the Bath season, he visited the metropolis, and again renewed his efforts to gain a settlement in one of the London theatres, but in vain.

After many repulses, Mr. Henderson appeared to have given up his flattering ideas of making a figure on the London stage. He entered into an agreement for three years with Mr. Palmer. In the summer of 1775, he performed with the late Mr. Reddish at Bristol; and in that of 1776, was engaged by Mr. Yates, at his theatre in Birmingham.

At last, what the united wishes of Mr. Henderson and his friends, as well as of the public at large, had been unable to effect, was brought about by accident. In 1777, Mr. Colman having purchased the patent of the Haymarket theatre of Mr. Foote, and engaged him as a principal performer,

began to reflect that the encreasing age and infirmities of that celebrated actor might disable him from furnishing his quota of public entertainment, and his good sense informed him, that in that case Mr. Henderson might prove a happy succedaneum. His offer to the latter of 100l. for the summer season was eagerly embraced, without even the stipulation of a benefit. The conjectures of the manager were fulfilled beyond his hopes. Mr. Foote was soon attacked by a paralytic disorder, which rendered him incapable of further service. But Mr. Henderson's name was a charm, that, in the heat of summer, drew together crowded houses; and it is computed that no less a sum than 4500l. was taken during the thirty-four nights of Mr. Henderson's performance. Mr. Colman, who derived so much advantage from his success, gave him a free benefit; and before the winter commenced, he was engaged by Mr. Sheridan for two years at Drury-lane theatre, at a salary of 10l. per week, with an indemnification from the penalty of his articles with the manager at Bath.

In the summer of 1778, he went to Ireland. In 1779, he married the lady whom he left a widow, and with whom he lived in great felicity. The same year, he went again to Ireland, and at the commencement of the winter season, removed to Covent-garden with an encreased stipend.

In the early part of his life, he was remarkable for delivering the works of Sterne with peculiar force and humour, and was once introduced to that gentleman, who expressed himself greatly pleased with the advantage his performances derived from

Mr.

Mr. Henderson's recitation. In the Lent season of 1775, Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Henderson united in entertaining the town with reading some of the works of our best English writers, and for several nights together they drew great audiences to Free-masons Hall.

Before Mr. Henderson's last voyage to Dublin, he renewed his engagement with Mr. Harris for four years. His last performance was on the 3d of November, 1785, in the character of *Horatius* in the *Roman Father*. He was soon after seized with a fever, from which, however, he seemed to be recovering. But in the moment that his friends were forming the most flattering expectations, he was unexpectedly seized with a spasm in the brain, and expired on the 25th of November, 1785. His remains, attended by a respectable cavalcade of his friends, were interred in Westminster-abbey, near the graves of Dr. Johnson and Mr. Garrick.

Mr. John Edwin was a comedian of very extraordinary merit. He made his first attempt in London, at Mr. Colman's theatre, and had afterwards a constant engagement at Covent-garden. His unparalleled abilities were greatly aided by an eccentricity of manners; and therefore he was particularly happy in all *outré* parts. Owing to some private disagreements his public fame seemed latterly to sink. He died at his lodgings in Bedford-street, July 31, 1790, aged forty-two, and was buried in St. Paul's Covent-garden, near Shuter. Some songs, jests, &c. were published with his name, which we presume, for his own sake, he never was the author of. "Edwin's Pills to purge

purge Melancholy," we apprehend were not altogether efficacious. His life was published by Mr. Williams (Anthony Pasquin) but contains nothing remarkable; for Mr. Edwin, though a wonderful comedian on the stage, was no great actor in life. In Mr. Oulton's opinion, O'Keefe was the support of Edwin, and Edwin the support of O'Keefe.

Mr. Thomas Ryder was a celebrated comedian, and esteemed the Roscius of Dublin, where he was manager for several years. His success was so great at first, aided by an unexpected prize in the lottery, as to lead to extravagance; but this extravagance sprung chiefly from the prodigal disposition of a wife, who, to be a fine lady, soon made a beggar of her husband. From this time to his death, he was always poor and involved, and, though in receipt of a considerable salary at the Theatre Royal, Covent-garden, a few months before his decease, was obliged suddenly to leave the kingdom. As a private character, his memory is justly entitled to approbation, for he devoted his time and the fruit of his labours solely to the instruction and support of his family. But as an actor, he merits to be spoken of in terms of still higher encomium. No man understood human nature better; this was his cue in the delineation of human character; and it is not strange that it should lead him to truth. More versatility of genius seldom fell to the lot of any man. He could sustain with credit every situation of the drama. Whether the strings of the heart were by sympathy to flush the face with pleasure, or to contort it with grief; whether the frank lover or the artful hypocrite

crite was to appear; whether the soul was to melt into pathos, or to kindle in hilarity—he was all in all. It has been said (and we believe with reason) that Mr. Harris did not do justice to his abilities; be this as it may, he ended his days in Ireland where his fame began. He died at Sandy-mount, November 26, 1791. His remains were interred in the church-yard of Drumcondra, attended by a numerous concourse of his friends.

Mr. Ryder was supposed to be an Irishman, but, he himself asserted that he was born in England. He was originally a printer, in the prosecution of which honorable profession he caught the rudiments of that true and elegant taste which won him the esteem and approbation of the public at every theatre upon which he appeared. There was a farce performed for his benefit, called, *Such Things have been*, said to be his own; but it was written by Mr. Jackman, and acted in Dublin under the title of the *Man of Parts*. Mr. Ryder, however, was the author of a few fragments, and an excellent judge of literary merit. His daughters he brought out on the stage a little before his death; they are now performers in Dublin. Mrs. Ryder did not long survive her husband.

Mr. William Parsons, a comedian of infinite humour, was born on the 29th of February, 1736. His father was a carpenter and builder in Bow-lane, Cheapside, in moderate circumstances, but, who gave his son a decent education at St. Paul's school; after he left which, he was some time with an eminent apothecary in London. At the age of fourteen, he had a turn for drawing, in which

which he displayed considerable taste. He was also fond of painting as an amusement, and some of his landscapes had considerable merit. Not liking the profession of physic, to which he was engaged, he took to the stage. At the age of twenty, being then performing with the Edinburgh company, he married a theatrical lady, whose name was Pryce. She was one of the two daughters of the royal gardener of Kensington, who, at their father's death, each inherited the sum of 5000l. which, we are told, passed quickly away with her first husband; and, being more than double Mr. Parson's age, all she brought her second was years and theatrical fame; for, in low comedy, she was a first-rate actress, and under her tuition, Mr. Parsons advanced in the public favour. She died in London, at a great age, in the year 1787. Immediately on her death he married Dorothy one of the three daughters of the Hon. James Stewart, brother to Alexander late Earl of Galloway, and particularly brought up with her aunt, the worthy Lady Catharine Murray. She had escaped from a convent at Lisle, where she had been placed by her brother, who carried her there from Dumfries a short time before, and being a stranger in London, and not hearing of or finding the gentleman she sought for, found a friend in Mr. Parsons, who, as is before said, on his first wife's death married her at Lee in Kent. She has borne him two sons, the youngest of whom is now living.

When he left his father and master to go on the stage, the place to which he repaired was York, where he obtained an engagement, and made his

first appearance in the part of *Southampton* in the *Earl of Essex*. In this character he is said to have been well received. He did not, however, stay long at York, but after a short trial of his abilities there, he removed about the year 1757 to Edinburgh, where he continued five years, when his reputation having reached the ear of Mr. Garrick, he received an invitation to Drury-lane theatre, and appeared there the first time on the 21st of September, 1762, in the character of *Filch* in the *Beggar's Opera*.

From his early performances at Edinburgh, it does not appear that he had then discovered the bent of his genius, or, if he had, was not able to indulge it. In an account of the performances at that theatre in the year 1759, he is only to be found the representative of what are called the walking gentlemen in comedies. He that year scarce rose above *Clerimont* in the *Miser*, *Worthy* in the *Recruiting Officer*, *Lord Morelove* in the *Careless Husband*, and *Count Basset* in the *Provoked Husband*. His first attempt in the old men of comedy, is said to have originated from the absence of Mr. Stamper, a provincial comedian of great celebrity, who quitted Edinburgh for Dublin. On this event Mr. Parsons first undertook the part of the *Miser*, and the applause he met with pointed out to him the line of acting, which he pursued with unremitting attention, and success equal to his fondest expectations.

On his reception at Drury-lane theatre, he wisely and providently determined to establish himself there by diligence and perseverance. His improvement

ment kept pace with his efforts, and in due time he became a great favorite with the manager and the public. On the secession of Mr. Yates, he succeeded to most of his characters; and though he had not at that time the chaste manner of that excellent performer, yet he substituted something so grotesque and pleasantly extravagant instead of it, that the loss of his predecessor was little felt, and not much regretted. In process of time, he became possessed of new characters, in which he could not suffer by any comparison with preceding actors. In the year 1770, he performed *Mr. Griskin* in *A Trip to Scotland*; in 1772, *Whittle* in the *Irish Widow*; in 1773, *Skirmish* in the *Deserter*; in 1775, *Davy* in *Bon Ton*; in 1777, *Crabtree* in the *School for Scandal*; and *Doctor Bartholo*, in the *Spanish Barber*; in 1779, *Doiley* in *Who's the Dupe*; and in the same year, *Sir Fretful Plagiary* in the *Critic*. In the conception and execution of these characters, which were worthy of the first performers of the age, it is universally admitted that he had no competitor, nor is likely ever to have an equal. The same praise is also due to his performance of *Corbaccio* in *Volpone*; *Foresight* in *Love for Love*; *Money-trap* in the *Confederacy*; *Don Manuel* in *She Would and She Would Not*; and in many other characters.

His attachment to Drury-lane theatre, was proved in an extraordinary manner, when his friend Powell, in 1767, became manager of Covent-garden theatre. He was then offered double his salary to remove to that house; a proposal which he steadily refused, and for the same reason rejected

repeated applications to go to Dublin. From the time of his engagement at Drury-lane, his summer engagements in the country were only at Liverpool, Birmingham, and Bristol, at which latter place he was a short time one of the managers. But his principal attachment was to the Haymarket theatre, of which he was one of the supports, and where his loss will be very severely felt.

For several years past he had been afflicted with an asthma, which every season gained ground upon his constitution. He continued, however, his extions on the stage, though with frequent interruptions, until near the close of his life. His last performance was the character of *Sir Fretful Plagiary*, on the 19th of January, 1795, and he survived little more than a fortnight. He died the 3d of February, and was buried at Lee, near Blackheath.

His warmth of temper under his asthmatic complaint to which he was subject did his constitution much harm. He had saved a fortune of 400l. a year, mostly in houses, which he has devised to his wife, leaving her sole executrix. On his death, his son was brought from school at Reading, Berks. under the care of an usher, a robust, healthy man, whose consolation, it is said, was so soothing to the afflicted widow, that, in four days, he led the restored lady to Hymen's temple: so that, we are informed, she had, for some days, a dead and a living husband in the same house at the same time. Mr. Parsons had considerable taste in pictures; and frequently purchased at brokers' shops works of

of the first masters, which he has, by times, disposed of for large sums. He had, also, by his own pencil, some valuable views, and drawings of ruins and of other buildings, which were lately sold at Christie's, in Pallmall, by order of his executrix.

We shall conclude this account with the following just character of Mr. Parsons, written by a gentleman well known in the literary world, and which appeared in one of the public papers:

Disdaining imitation's servile plan,
Vers'd in the various whims of changeful man,
As long as genuine humour can invite,
Parsons will still be seen with keen delight.
Borrowing from none, original and true,
He nature's mirror always holds in view,
His chief success is seen in lower life,
In noisy drunkenness and peevish strife;
And in the petulance of testy age
Superior merit ne'er enrich'd the stage.
'Tis said, the common passion for applause
Sometimes aside his better judgment draws,
That loud extravagance and wild grimace
Too oft are seen usurping nature's place;
But in the scenes our living Congreve drew,
Where *Crabtree*'s spite so well pourtray'd we view,
Or where *Sir Fretful* rankles with the smart
Of struggling passions that degrade the heart,
Can e'n malignant Envy say he's found
Beyond the verge of modest Nature's bound:
Bias'd by pleasures past, perhaps my mind
Is to some casual faults in Parsons blind,
For in the limits of his proper sphere,
To me, I own, no errors e'er appear:

And tho' nice critics may the judgment blame,
Parsons to me seems worthy of a name
Of highest eminence in comic fame.

Mr. William Farren was a respectable performer in Covent-garden theatre. His father (a soap-boiler in London, who was unfortunate in business) bound him apprentice to Mr. Baylis, a tinman, in Red-Lion-street, Holborn. His turn of mind not suiting with business, he soon ran away from his master, and joined a party of players. Some time after, when performing at the Little theatre in the Haymarket, his merits were not overlooked by Mr. Yates, who had then the Birmingham theatre. His father being by that time dead, Mr. Yates negociated with his master for his indenture, and, at the age of eighteen, he was articled to Yates for seven years. With the Birmingham company he always attended, where his modest merits never passed unnoticed. When his articles were expired, he never failed to visit his friends in Birmingham in the summer, till, in the year 1781, he got connected with a lady who was separated from her husband; and, such was his partiality for her, that he took her off, and placed her at Richmond. She lived with him to his death, and bore him eight children, four of whom are now living. His summer excursions had for many years, been only to his house near Kingston, in Surry, where he spent much of his time in fishing on the Thames, a favorite pursuit with him, and to which he is said to have attributed his death, by taking cold, which brought on a dropsy in the chest. He died at his house in Gower-street, May the 9th, 1795, aged

aged forty one. He was buried in the church-yard of St. Paul's, Covent-garden. From the liberality of Percival Pott, Esq. a gentleman who, from his infancy, has had a partiality for him, has for many years lived with him, and who was his principal mourner; and from his own attention and œconomy, he is said to have died worth 800l. a year, independant of his engagements with the theatre; which, with his benefit, brought him more than the like sum annually. His cast of parts were in the second walk of acting, though he supported with applause all the first, and ever acted with sense and judgment.

Mr. Baddeley, another comedian of much humour, though confined, died the same year that the theatre had lost Mr. Parsons. He was taken ill while dressing for the character of *Moses*, in the *School for Scandal*, and departed this life shortly after.

Mr. Baddeley, it is said, was bred a cook; and as such was engaged in Lord North's family. His first introduction to the theatre was by means of Mr. Foote, and having gone abroad and visited the continent, acquired such knowledge of French characters, as to become a very happy representative of *Monsieur*. A Miss Snow, daughter of a state trumpeter to his Majesty, lived with him; this lady he has introduced to the managers of Drury-lane, as Mrs. Baddeley, and she soon became a favorite with the town. This connection, however, like the generality of those made by *free love*, was soon dissolved.

Mr. Baddeley in his will, bequeathed the ladies and

and gentlemen of Drury-lane, an annual Twelfth Cake, &c. which they have already partaken of.

Drury-lane has suffered much by the *retirement* of performers; as well as by *deaths*. Since Mr. Smith left the stage, *Charles Surface* has never been so gay and vivacious—the loss of Mr. Bensley, also, who had been 32 years on the stage, is, though not *irreparable*, much to be *lamented*. This house has been equally unfortunate in the deaths of the two following eminent composers:

THOMAS LINLEY, Esq. who was one of the joint proprietors of Drury-lane theatre, died suddenly at his house in Southampton-street, November the 19th, 1795.

As a musician, Mr. Linley's talents are well known. His works are not distinguished by any striking marks of original genius, but they uniformly manifest taste, feeling, and a full knowledge of his art. The public are indebted to him for many beautiful airs; he has harmonized with great judgment the melodies of former writers; and, if it was not in his power to astonish by sublime effects, his compositions always soothe and charm by delicacy, simplicity, and tenderness. There was one quality in the character of Mr. Linley, which is rarely found in men of any profession, when the pretensions of a competitor are concerned. He always allowed the talents of every rival in his art, and not only admitted, but warmly asserted the merits of his contemporaries, as well as of former musicians. As a man, Mr. Linley was judicious and intelligent; he knew human nature, and described it with a force that proved his observations to be the result

result of his own enquiry and reflections. He was peculiarly grave in his manners, but not austere, except when he was disgusted by an evident absurdity, rhat hardly any patience could tolerate. In his convivial moments, he was open, chearful, and abundant in anecdote, which he detailed with peculiar strength of language, and a delicacy of sentiment, that few but his immediate friends could discover through the general reserve and solemnity of his deportment. In the ordinary relations of life, he always proved himself an affectionate husband, a tender parent, a steady friend, and a man of indisputable probity and honor. How he conducted himself in the parental character, the world need not be told, as the talents which nature so bountifully bestowed upon his family received every advantage that assiduous cultivation could afford them, and there have, perhaps, been few men who have suffered such severe trials of fortitude, in being deprived of the dearest solace of a father, at the time when his offspring were flourishing in the pride of genius and the meridian of celebrity. These trials, however, he bore like a father, but like a philosopher also. His daughter, who was Mr. Sheridan's former wife, was the once celebrated *Maid of Bath.*

Mr. Stephen Storace died March the 15th, 1796. This gentleman, born in 1765, was the son of Mr. S. Storace, a native of Italy, who married the daughter of Trusler, the proprietor of Marybone-gardens, so much famed for making "Rich Seed cakes and Epping butter." In the early

early part of his life, he discovered a strong propensity for music, which his father took such pains to cultivate, that at the age of ten or eleven, he was able to perform the most difficult solo of Tartini and Giardini on the violin, with the greatest precision. According to the fashion of the times, he was placed in a conservatori, or musical college, in Italy; and thinking the study of composition more respectable than scraping cat-gut, he turned his whole attention to the theory of composition. The proficiency he made, we are enabled to judge of by his early productions: he wrote his best composition, the finale to the first act of the *Pirates*, while at Vienna; and most of the pieces, for which he has since been so greatly admired, during his residence upon the Continent. Returning to England, he resided for some time at Bath; but finding no opening there, or in London, at that time, he was induced to give up his musical pursuits, and turn his attention to drawing, an art for which he always had a predilection. His introduction to Drury-lane theatre was occasioned by the friendship of Mr. Kelly, who had known him in Italy. In this situation, he found ample scope for his abilities; and the public thought so favorably of his taste, that he is said to have received greater prices for some of his operas from the music dealers than was ever given before, although they chiefly consisted of compilations. His operas of the greatest popularity are, the *Haunted Tower*, *Siege of Belgrade*, and *No Song No Supper*. As a composer, he had much fire and spirit, though little originality. His chief merit lay in his quartettos and finales. The melody of his airs was generally pleasant, though not

not always consonant with the sentiments of the poet. An attack of the gout in his head snatched our young composer from the world, at the early age of thirty three. He married the daughter of Mr. Hall the engraver, by whom he left several children. He left the music of an opera unfinished, which was afterwards brought out, and the author (Mr. Hoare) gave up all the emoluments arising therefrom to his family. The managers likewise, gave the widow a benefit, for Mr. Storace, notwithstanding all the money he received, died in humble circumstances. He was distinguished in private life for shrewdness, penetration, and knowledge of mankind. His first composition for Drury-lane theatre was the *Doctor and Apothecary*, which was performed on the day of his death.

The only recent affairs which have occurred at theatre, are confined to Drury-lane. Mr. Kemble having advertised *Hamlet* for his benefit, 1796, which play was likewise chosen by Mrs. Jordan for her's: it was left to the managers to decide which should have it. They very judiciously declared that *neither*. Mr. Kemble, in consequence of this decision, resigned his acting management, and Mr. Grubb (one of the proprietors) conducts, it is said, the whole theatrical business.

But that which has most of all excited curiosity, and engrossed the public attention, is the discovery of the supposed Shakspearian MSS. These papers were espoused by Mr. Ireland, who published a splendid volume, with the following contents.

Fac-simile of Shakspeare's Autograph.

Fac-simile of Queen Elizabeth's letter to him.

Fac-

Fac-simile of four Miscellaneous papers.

Fac-simile of a letter to Anna Hatherewaye (whom Shakspeare afterwards married) inclosing a lock of his hair.

Fac-simile of a copy of verses to the same.

Fac-simile of Shakspeare's letter to the Earl of Southampton.

Fac-simile of the Earl's Answer.

Fac-simile of Shakspeare's profession of his faith.

Fac-simile of a letter to Richard Cowley.

Fac-simile of a pen drawing or sketch of Shakspeare by himself, with his arms and crest, with two signatures of his name.

Fac-simile of the Reverse, with his Initials, &c.

A deed of gift to William Henry Ireland, with fac-similes of his signature and seal.

Fac-simile of tributary lines to Ireland, with the arms of Ireland and Shakspeare linked together by a chain, sketched by himself.

Fac-simile, a pen sketch of Ireland's house in Blackfriars.

Fac-simile of the arms of Shakspeare's and Ireland.

Fac-simile of Shakspeare in the characters of Bassanio and Shylock, whole length tinted drawings.

Agreement with Lowine.

Agreement with Condelle.

Lease to Michael Fraser and his wife.

Deed of trust to John Hemynge.

Tragedy of King Lear, with fac-similes.

Fac-simile of the first page of Hamlet.

In the preface to this work, Mr. Ireland observes, that, "from the first moment of this discovery

covery to the present hour, he has incessantly labored, by every means in his power, to inform himself with respect to the validity of these interesting papers. Throughout this period, there has not been an ingenious character, or disinterested individual in the circle of literature to whose critical eye he has not been earnest that the whole should be subjected. He has courted, he has even challenged the critical judgment of those who are best skilled in the poetry and phraseology of the times in which Shakspeare lived, as well as those whose profession or course of study has made them conversant with ancient deeds, writings, seals, and autographs. Wide and extensive as this range may appear, and it includes the scholar, the man of taste, the antiquarian, and the herald, his enquiries have not rested in the closet of the speculatist; he has been equally anxious that the whole should be submitted to the practical experience of the mechanic, and be pronounced upon by the paper-maker, &c. as well as by the author. He has ever been desirous of placing them in any view, and under any light that could be thrown upon them; and he has, in consequence, the satisfaction of announcing to the public, that, as far as he has been able to collect the sentiments of the several classes of persons above referred to, they have unanimously testified in favour of their authenticity; and declared that, where there was such a mass of evidences, internal and external, it was impossible, amidst such various sources of detection, for the art of imitation to have hazarded so much without betraying itself; and, consequently, that these papers can be no other than the production of Shakspeare himself."

To the question of discovery, Mr. Ireland replies, that, "he received them from his son, Samuel William Henry Ireland, a young man, then under 19 years of age, by whom the discovery was accidentally made, at the house of a gentleman of considerable property. Amongst a mass of family papers, the contracts between Shakspeare, Lowine, and Condelle, and the lease granted by him and Hemynge to Michael Fraser, which was first found, were discovered, and, soon afterwards the deed of gift to William Henry Ireland (described as the friend of Shakspeare, in consequence of his having saved his life on the river Thames, when in extreme danger of being drowned) and also the deed of trust to John Hemynge were discovered. In pursuing this search, he was so fortunate as to meet with some deeds very material to the interests of this gentleman, and such as established, beyond all doubt, his title to a considerable property; deeds of which this gentleman was as ignorant, as he was of his having in his possession any of the MSS. of Shakspeare. In return for this service, added to the consideration that the young man bore the same name and arms with the person who saved the life of Shakspeare, this gentleman promised him every thing relative to the present subject, that had been or should be, found, either in town, or at his house in the country. At this house, the principal part of the papers, together with a great variety of books, containing his MS. notes, and three MS. plays, with part of another, were discovered."

Here follows the enquiry, "Who the gentleman is from whom these papers have obtained?" To this Mr. Ireland answers, that, "when he applied

applied to the original possessor of the papers for permission to print them, it was not obtained but under the strongest injunction that his name should not appear. This injunction has, throughout all the stages of this business, been uniformly declared; and as this gentleman has dealt most liberally with the editor, he can confidently say, that in his turn, he has, with equal openness and candour, conducted himself towards the public, to whom, immediately upon every communication made, every thing has been submitted without reserve."

Mr. Ireland further informed the public, that (besides the play of *Vortigern*, then preparing for representation at Drury-lane theatre) another, and more interesting historical play has been discovered amongst the other papers in the hand writing of Shakspeare; and that this will, in due time, be laid before the public.

He likewise acquaints them, that, "he is in possession of a great part of Shakspeare's library, in which are many books, with notes in his own hand, and those of a very curious nature. Some of these he most probably will reprint."

Several now expressed their opinions *for* and *against* these papers, among whom were the following

FOR

Sir Isaac Heard, Kt. Garter King at Arms, Mr. Erskine, Rev. Dr. Parr, John Byng, Esq. Thomas Caldecot, Esq. Albany Wallis, Esq. Caleb Whitefoord, Esq. Craven Ord, Esq. Gilbert Francklyn, Esq. Sir James Bland Burgess.

AGAINST.

Edmund Lodge, Esq. Lancaster herald, editor of the Howard, Talbot, and Cecil MSS. Sir A.

Macdonald, chief baron of the Exchequer. Sir Joseph Banks, K. B. Sir W. Scott, Kt. &c. Doctors Commons, Owen Salusbury Brereton, Esq. Frederick Barnard, Esq. librarian to his Majesty, Dr. Charles Combe, Dr. Grieve, James Boaden, Esq. George Hardinge, Esq. John Courtney, Esq. Lord Lauderdale, John Reeves, Esq. George Chalmers, Esq.

Lord Orford, Bishop of Dromore, Rev. Mr. Henley, Rev. Dr. Farmer, George Stevens, Esq. Edmund Malone, Esq. Isaac Reed, Esq. Joseph Ritson, Esq. Holt White, Esq. commentators on Shakspeare.

Duke of Leeds, Duke of Roxburgh, Charles Gray, Esq. Samuel Lysons, Esq. Anthony Storer, Esq. Richard Bull, Esq.

Benjamin West, Esq. John Farrington, Esq. William Hamilton, Esq. John Hoppner, Esq. Thomas Lawrence, Esq. George Dance, Esq. Richard Westall, Esq. Ozias Humphrey, Esq. Richard Cosway, Esq. Henry Fuseli, Esq. members of the Royal-Academy. Roger Wilbraham, Esq. Richard Porson, M. A. Greek professor in the university of Cambridge, James Pye, Esq. poet laureat, Bishop of Salisbury, Bishop of London. John Topham, Esq. Thomas Astle, Esq. keepers of the records in the State-paper office. R. B. Sheridan, Esq. Thomas Harris, Esq. Mr. Waldron.

A pamphlet controversy now took place. Mr. Boaden published the first *against* the papers. It contained many shrewd ingenious arguments, but was written in a stile rather pompous, and in some places scurrilous. There were two or three anonymous

mous replies well written; but the most considerable work on the subject was a large pamphlet by Mr. Malone, which, though promised *three weeks*, did not appear till *three days* before the representation of *Vortigern*.

Mr. Malone, after making some pertinent remarks on the round-about manner, in which the papers in question were exhibited to public view, is willing to take no advantage of that circumstance; but undertakes to prove from the orthography, the phraseology, the dates given, or by inference deducible, and the dissimilitude of the hand writing, "that not a single paper or deed in this extraordinary volume, was written, or executed by the person to whom it is ascribed." In pursuance of this plan, he regularly examines every one of the nineteen documents produced by Mr. Ireland: and victoriously demonstrates them to be spurious from internal evidence.

The first of these documents is a letter from Queen Elizabeth to Shakspeare; which we here give verbatim.—"Wee didde receive youre prettye verses goode masterre William through the hands off oure Chambelayne and wee doe complemente thee onne theyre greate excellence We shalle departe fromme Londonne toe Hamptowne forre the holydayes where wee shalle expecte thee withe thye beste actorres thatte thou mayste playe before ourselfe toe amuse usse bee notte slowe butte comme toe usse bye Tuesdaye nexte ass the lord Leicesterre wille bee withe usse."

(*Superscribed*)

"For master William Shakspeare aite the Globe bye Thames.

(*On a small paper stuck on*)

" Thys letterre I dydde receyve fromme mye moste gracyouse ladye Elizabethe ande I doe requeste itte maye be kepte with alle care possyble

" Wm. Shakespeare"

This pretended letter of our *virgin queen*, Mr. Malone dissects with much dexterity.—" First," says he, " the spelling is not only not the orthography of Elizabeth, or of her time, but is, for the most part, the orthography of no age whatsoever. From the time of Henry the fourth, I have perused some thousand deeds and other MSS; and I never once found the copulative *and* spelt, as it is here, with a final *e*. The same observation may be made on the word *forre*, a mode of orthography I believe unprecedented. The clumsy fabricator had seen *far* written in old books *farre*; and took it for granted that a word so nearly similar as *for* had anciently the same terminating letters."—" The absurd manner" adds Mr. Malone, " in which almost every word is overladen with both consonants and vowels, will at once strike every reader, who has any knowledge of the state of our language at the period referred to," To prove this, he gives specimens of English orthography from Chaucer, Sir John Fortescue, Lord Surrey, Sir Philip Sidney, Puttenham, Spenser, &c. and concludes, that those specimens, " without the aid of other specimens of Queen Elizabeth's own orthography (to be given afterwards) prove decisively" that the paper before us, " in which such laboured and capricious deformity of spelling is introduced, could not be written by Elizabeth; but is a mere forgery."—

But

But this is still clearer from a table which Mr. Malone gives us of twenty-four common words in the spelling of the spurious letter compared with the certain orthography of Elizabeth: namely, *youre* for *your*, *goode* for *good*, *off* for *of*, *ande* for *and*, *wee* for *we*, *doe* for *do*, *onne* for *on*, *shalle* for *shall*, *fromme* for *from*, *toe* for *to*, *beste* for *best*, *before* for *befor*, *thatte* for *that*, *oure* for *our*, *bee* for *be*, *butte* for *but*, *usse* for *us*, *comme* for *come*, *asse* for *as*, *withe* for *with*, *atte* for *at*.

2d. The language and phraseology differs from that of those times.—*Pretty* verses, *complement* used as a verb, *excellence* applied to written compositions, *ourself* written as one word, *amuze* in the modern meaning of *amuse*.

3d. The superscription is absurd. "Her majesty, instead of sending this letter by one of her ordinary messengers, superscribes it herself; not indeed precisely in the fashion of a letter sent by the modern penny-post, but with the formality of those epistles, which, in her time, were conveyed by common carriers, or state messengers, from one part of the kingdom to the other: *For master William Shakspeare, atte the Globe bye Thames*. Had she added *deliver this with speed*, it would have been complete.—But where is this letter to find the poet? *At the Globe by Thames!*—Unluckily the *Globe theatre* was not built at the time to which this letter must be referred; and when it was built, it was not situated by Thames, but in Maiden-lane, a street in Southwark, at some distance from the river, as is proved by an authentic document in my possession."—That the Globe theatre did not exist at

the

the time to which the letter must be referred, is clear from this, that although the writer cautiously avoided putting a date to it, he has furnished us with a negative one, by mentioning Lord *Leycester* as then living. But that nobleman died in the early part of 1588; when it is in the highest degree improbable that Shakspeare had composed any drama at all, or was conspicuous as an actor.

On Shakspeare's supposed *minute* annexed to the letter, Mr. Malone observes, that we "have here the modest and careless Shakspeare, who flung his writings to the world, unconscious of their excellence, and negligent of their fate, sedulously docketing his papers with the punctilious exactness of a merchant or attorney." Certainly there is more wit than just reasoning in this observation. The Bard of Avon might, in general, be careless of his own productions, and yet sedulously *docket* a letter from a *Queen*.

The difference of orthography, or even the difference of chirography, is not always an infallible proof of forgery. In the days of Shakspeare, and long after, there was no grammatical *king in Israel*; every one followed that mode of spelling which was *good in his own eyes*.

Mr. Malone thus concludes: "My last topic is, I will not say the dissimilitude, but the total and entire dissimilitude of every part of the hand-writing of this letter (except the signature) from Elizabeth's genuine hand-writing. Even in the signature itself, there are no less than six gross errors. The first is, that it is too small for the period to which it must be referred. The second, that the pretended autograph inclines sideways, whereas her

her genuine autographs are *bolt-upright*. The third is a deviation from the queen's mode of forming the first letter of her name. The fourth, is in the formation of the letter *a*. The fifth, is in forming the *b* open at bottom. The sixth, in not connecting the *R** with the other letters by a line passing throngh the *h*."

After great preparation of the town, and much expectation, the tragedy of *Vortigern* was brought out, April the 2d, 1796. Previous to the performance, the following hand-bill was circulated through the theatre, and distributed at the doors.

VORTIGERN.

"A malevolent and impotent attack on the Shakspeare MS. having appeared on the eve of representation of the play of *Vortigern*, evidently intended to injure the interest of the Proprietor of the MS. Mr. Ireland feels it impossible, within the short space of time that intervenes between the publishing and the representation, to produce an answer to the most illiberal and unfounded assertions in Mr. Malone's Enquiry. He is therefore induced to request that the play of *Vortigern* may be heard with that candour that has ever distinguished a British audience.

The outline of the fable, so far as it relates to the calling in of the Saxons, is borrowed from the memorable event in our history, and affords ample scope for incident, passion, and pathos. The audience listened for a considerable time with great attention and liberality; but at last an *unfortunate laugh*, infinitely more fatal than a thousand hisses to a new tragedy, having been somehow excited,

the

the theatre assumed one continual simper during the whole night.

By many of the critics this play was considered as a *pasticio*; in other words, the dialogue was deemed by some to be a compilation, not only from Shakspeare himself, but also from later writers. Pascentius's "Progress of Mortality," is given as a familiar instance of the first, and the passage containing a poetical description of Death's progress, is thought to afford an example of the latter charge.

The following quotation will afford an opportunity for the candid and unprejudiced to judge for themselves:

Act V. Scene II.

Vortigern.

Time was, alas! I needed not this spur,
But here's a goading, and a stinging thorn—
That does unstring my nerves. O conscience, conscience,
When thou did'st cry, I then did stop thy mouth,
And thrust upon thee dire ambition.
O! I did think that kings indeed were gods,
But I was sore deceived; for as I pass'd
And travers'd in proud triumph the Basse-Court,
There I saw death clad in most hideous colour;
A sight it was that did appal my soul,
Yes curdled thick this mass of blood within me.
Full fifty breathless bodies struck my sight,
And some with gaping mouths, did seem to mock me;
Whilst others smiling in cold death itself,
Scoffingly

Scoffingly bad me look on that, which soon
Would wrench from off my brow, this sacred crown.
And make me too, a subject like themselves.
And to whom? to Death, thou King of Kings;
That hast for thy domain the world immense:
Churchyards and charnel houses are thy haunts,
And hospitals thy sumptuous palaces;
And when thou would'st be merry, thou dost chuse
The gaudy chamber of a dying king.
O! then thou dost ope wide thy boney jaws,
And with rude laughter, and fantastic tricks,
Thou clap'st thy rattling fingers to thy sides:
And, when this solemn mockery is ended,
With icy hand thou tak'st him by the feet,
And upward so, till thou dost reach the heart,
And wrap him in the cloak of lasting night.—

It must be allowed to have been an unfortunate circumstance that Mr. Whitfield, wholly unable to recite, was obliged to *read* the prologue. The epilogue was delivered with much point and humour, by Mrs. Jordan. Mrs. Powell, in the character of Edmunda, deserved great commendation, as she appeared to be in *earnest*, a species of praise to which others did not seem ambitious to aspire. On an occasion like the present, an actor ought not to exhibit any opinion of his own; he should personate his character, and deport himself with his accustomed spirit and energy.

A prologue was written by the Poet Laureat, but was rejected by Mr. Ireland, as it did not in his opinion, express the authenticity of the papers, in terms sufficiently strong.

After

After the performance and failure of the play, the possessor of the MSS. in an advertisement stated, that he had little to do with the merits or demerits of the play, which was not decidedly sold as written by Shakspeare, but was intended to be laid before the public merely as a theatrical performance, and if the play merited all the obloquy thrown upon it, the error lay with the manager, not with him. This declaration, however, did not agree with the reason assigned for the rejection of Mr. Pye's Prologue; and that which was spoken does not hold out any doubt on the subject. He further said, that if by an improper disposition of the characters a burlesque effect was produced, he cannot be implicated, as he had not the management of the Piece.

Some short time after, there was a meeting of about thirty gentlemen, of known judgment and literature, to examine into the authenticity of these curious papers. Mr. Ireland's son was present; and he, in the most solemn manner, offering even to take an oath upon the subject, acquitted his father of all knowledge of the quarter from whence the manuscripts were derived. He besides pledged himself to use every possible means in his power, in order to discover the person who brought them to light. The gentlemen present resolved to enter into an elaborate investigation of the whole, and to give their opinion impartially to the public.

THE END

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